

Psychology of Sex Relations by Theodor Reik



**PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX RELATIONS**



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# PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX RELATIONS

THEODOR REIK

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*FOR MY SON ARTHUR*

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**PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX RELATIONS**

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## *In Pursuit of Happiness*

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THIS IS the last time I shall walk to my lonely bench before returning to New York tomorrow. It is only a modest hill but you ascend more slowly when you approach your sixties. Evening comes early now, although it is still the first week of September. Already there is a foreboding of fall in the air, and many yellow leaves are fluttering on the ground near my bench. The branches shiver in the evening breeze. One hour more and it will be dark, calm, and cool. The mountain peak to the west glows as if the setting sun has spent its warm blood upon it. It is the season of farewells.

Down the road I see John and Jane who pass by arm in arm without looking up. I like this young couple, who are on their honeymoon. They are cheerful but serious and obviously so happy that all in the hotel smile upon meeting them. The disenchanted La Rochefoucauld remarked once that it is with love as with a ghost: "All talk of it, but nobody has seen it." What the sceptical duke says here is certainly not true. Seeing many thousand couples like John and Jane should have convinced him of the psychological reality of love. But perhaps he meant it differently. Perhaps he thought of love as something permanent, even eternal. But that concept would be very unwise in a philosopher and an observer of human nature as keen as he; that love is short-lived does not diminish its reality. It is as real as the flower, the spring, as youth, as life itself. There is a song I heard once in La Rochefoucauld's country:

*La vie est vaine  
Un peu d'amour*



*Un peu de haine  
Et puis bon jour.*

Yes, seeing John and Jane is believing in love.

What is the secret of their happiness? The question springs on you unaware, as if coming from unknown depths. "Don't be silly," you answer. "They are in love." You stop at this point, for you do not want to make a fool of yourself by asking more questions. Nevertheless, there *are* such questions.

That John and Jane are in love does not mean the same thing to different people. The word has a variety of meanings, but never mind them now. Is John happy because he loves Jane? Is it this state of temporary insanity which fills him with beatitude? Doubtless he would be less happy—indeed, he would be even unhappy—if his affection were not returned. Thus, John is happy because he loves and is loved. The satisfaction originating from these two factors is clearly of a different nature. Simple self-observation proves that there is another quality in the happy state of feeling tenderness and that of being the object of affection. To love satisfies a craving, a desire to give tenderness; being loved fulfills another need, the individual wish to be wanted and appreciated. If loving is a special kind of achievement, being loved is the reward given to it. Because these two feelings can exist independently, they must be different, and they have to be psychologically differentiated. To love means to long for someone. To be loved means to belong to someone. The satisfaction of being the object of another person's tenderness has clearly the character of an ego-gratification. It is related to feelings of satisfied vanity, of fulfilled pride, of realized ambition. It inflates the ego and adds to the sense of one's value. Loving in itself has apparently not the same characteristics. The lover feels humble.

We guess that to be loved is not the only gain from the ego-side in the relationship of John and Jane. There is, for instance, the feeling of power which John has, the great satisfaction of protecting and helping her, and there are similar tendencies in Jane. She is happy because she is secure and can trust him, but she is also happy because she can lead and influence him. In the psychological situation on both sides there are trends of gentle

or subtle domination and possessiveness which are connected with their devotion but which function as independent emotional strivings. John thinks of Jane as the person dearest to him, but sometimes he thinks of her almost as his property. Jane thinks of John as her own, but sometimes she imagines that she owns him.

Are these the only needs which are satisfied in the union of John and Jane? Of course not. They are also happy because their sexual wishes are fulfilled. They are happy not only because they love each other but also because they live together. Undoubtedly, the satisfaction which springs from this source is different from that caused by the two factors previously sketched. John has perhaps felt this particular satisfaction of sex with other women whom he did not love. Perhaps it was not as deep and satisfactory, but it was there and it contributed to his well-being and well-feeling.

The question What makes this young couple happy in their union? leads to three sources: love, ego-gains, and sex-gratification. Here are three sharply differentiated drives. With John and Jane these drives are united in each towards a single person, but they can concern several objects and can exist independently, each in search of its particular aim. In the highest moments of love the three drives seem to fuse and are often confused, but in sober psychological analysis they are obviously different. Sex is tied to the body and love to the mysterious something we call soul. Sex aims at physical gratification; love, at the enrichment and enlargement of the personality; and the ego-drives, at the achievement of conquest and power. Sex is a biological need, but love and the ego-urges appear as strivings of a more personal nature. We seem also to evaluate the three needs differently, as if they spring from different levels of human nature. We value love more than sex and the ego-drives. All the world loves a lover, but not all the world loves a man because he wants to go to bed with a woman.

John's and Jane's happiness now appears to us founded on a synthesis of satisfactions of different kinds: of the sex-urge, the needs of the ego, and the craving for love. What the young couple feels is only one stream of happiness, but this stream itself is the result of the conflux of several currents. We should like to follow



each to its source in order to examine the nature of the separate rivers whose powers are united in the phenomenon we now observe.

What seemed so simple at first now appears to be very complicated. What people call love is in reality a mixture of very varied components. Almost two hundred and fifty years ago Jonathan Swift wrote the poem *Cadenus and Vanessa* in which these lines appear :

Love, why do we one passion call  
When 'tis a compound of them all?

The truth here expressed has to be rediscovered because it was lost. A modern psychologist who would observe John and Jane would not deny that they are in love, but if he were asked what love is, he would answer unhesitatingly: "An aim-inhibited form of the sex-urge." Perhaps it would be best to start from this point and begin our new research with the questions What is sex? What can psychology tell us about the origin and the character of this powerful drive?



FIRST PART

THE NATURE OF THE SEX-DRIVE

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## *The Nature of the Sex-Drive*

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THE QUESTION what sex is, cannot be answered by psychologists.<sup>1</sup> It is a problem they cannot tackle. It has to be dealt with by biologists, biochemists, and physiologists. So far as we can understand, the crude sex-drive is a biological need which represents the instinct and is conditioned by chemical changes within the organism. The urge is dependent on inner secretions, and its aim is the relieving of a physical tension. The internal stimuli activated by the chemical changes tend to bring about a discharge, a release comparable to excretion. That is the nature of the crude sex-drive—nothing more, but also nothing less.

What has psychology to do with the examination of the subject? Psychological research in this realm is exactly the same as that in the manifestations of hunger, thirst, excretion, and other vital needs. It is the task of physiological psychology to describe and classify the sensations which were perceived and to describe the pleasant or painful feelings excited by these sensations. A German psychologist, H. Rehmke, once aptly called feelings "the ego-side of sensations." To explore this side is the very restricted task of psychology in this realm. Let me add that scientific psychology has not been adequate in such research until now. Beyond classifying and describing the feelings and sensations, psychologists and psychoanalysts have neither place nor voice in the research of the crude sex-drive. It is the expression of a biological

<sup>1</sup> We are no better able to define sexuality today than we were twenty years ago, when Freud said to his students: "Don't forget that we are, at present, not in possession of a generally accepted and generally recognized mark of sexuality. The chemical peculiarities which we may expect are still awaiting discovery." (*Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*.)



urge which in its original form is as primitive and elementary as hunger or the need of excretion. Its nature is originally not more complicated than these instincts, and its psychological importance is not greater so long as it remains the drive in its unmixed and primitive form. It has no more claim on our attention as psychologists than thirst and is a crude impulse not capable of any other use. If sex contacts were only determined by the plain sex-drive, a book like this with the title *Psychology of Sex-Relations* would scarcely be possible.

The psychological complication begins only after the sex-drive is combined with or contradicted by ego-drives, these older urges in the individual. The sex-need gains its great significance only in its alloy with non-sexual drives. The trouble is that wherever we meet the sex-drive, or rather its manifestations, there is already such an alloy. Sex is certainly younger than the first aim of the human organism—the desire to remain alive, to protect himself against destruction. Of course we sometimes see that animals in heat neglect all precautions; the mountain cock, during the mating season, is careless of the approaching hunter. But is this not so with other instincts in emergency-situations? Will not a man who is starving defy all danger in order to get food?

We do not know how sex and sexuality came into organic life; not even biologists can tell us.<sup>2</sup> Certainly sex had originally no personal meaning. It is naïve to assume that the blind sexual energy, which is called libido, has a personal character. The crude sex-drive appears to be more a push away from something than a pull toward something—an attempt to escape from the organic pressure within the individual. When we think or speak of the sex-drive we take for granted what is really an unjustified alliance between its intrinsic urge and the stimulation it receives from an external object. It is originally objectless, a sensation within the

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the best explanation is contained in the old myth which Aristophanes narrates in Plato's "Symposium" and which tells of the original man-woman being. The bisexual creature was split by Zeus. Now each half longs that its fellow should come to it again and then they fling their arms around each other and in mutual embrace they yearn to be grafted together. Their private parts shifted to the front are used for propagation. It would not be too daring to assume that Aristophanes deals here less with the origin of love than that of sex and that he traces copulation back to the joining of two separated parts to their original state of unity. (Protozoa.)



organism which demands release like the pressure of the bladder. This indiscriminate drive will later be directed to an object-choice. It is at first not very choosy and usually depends mostly on what object is most easily available. Later on those objects will be chosen which will promise most satisfaction of a physical kind, but even then the question of easy opportunity will be of utmost importance. Napoleon called adultery cynically "*une affaire du canapé*." The readiness to change one object for another is significant on this level. If Ann is not there, Mary will do.<sup>3</sup>

It would be in the interest of psychological clarity if we could differentiate between the state of a general sexual urge and that of the wish for a certain sexual object. I propose to make this difference clear by distinguishing between these two cases, calling the first "in need" and the second "desire." The person in need feels a strong sexual pressure without the image of a definite object. Desire signifies the wish to be sexually united with a certain person. You could compare this difference with that between a man who is very hungry, and to whom any food would be welcome, and another who chooses to have steak, slightly overdone. There are, of course, transitions possible from the one state to the other. A man can say: "I would like to eat meat" or "I want some vegetables."

Let us, for a moment, think of sexual intercourse as an act performed without distinction of persons, and purely as a hygienic procedure, as an opportunity to release the physical tension. Such a supposition might be psychologically impossible for cultured persons, yet let us tentatively admit that a man can have intercourse with a woman whom he has never seen and whose face is covered with a shawl. In such an imaginary case (which often was realized in soldiers' brothels during the war) sexual intercourse would be a poor satisfaction, devoid of joy—something comparable to an elimination, and not more refreshing than an ejection which eases a physical tension. A neurotic patient whose sexual potency was rather unstable once reported to me that he tried a similar experiment. He decided, pressed by his sex-need,

<sup>3</sup> A cartoon in the "Simplicissimus" showed a man running to catch a bus. The caption offered the comment of a bystander: "Never run after a bus or a woman. In two or three minutes another will come along."

to have intercourse with a prostitute without attempting to feel any emotional involvement, without, as he said, activity or interest in the act, and without co-operation on his part. The woman asked him in the middle of the act, "Do you want a newspaper?"

Where, then, can an expression of the unmixed sex-drive be found? I am sure I do not know. It should be secured by experiments in a laboratory, but no such experiment has come to my knowledge. The conditions which would be necessary are hard to obtain. How is it possible to exclude the factor of emotion, to remove the influence of thoughts and fantasies connected with sex as we know it, to eliminate the effects of other drives which accompany the sexual urge? It seems that we can never reach the psychological expression of the sex-instinct in its crudest, most primitive form. We can only hope to come near to it, yet it is very doubtful whether laboratory experiment is likely to provide an approximate answer. The results of questionnaires published by Havelock Ellis and many American physicians have no more than a provisional value.

Sometimes life itself grants conditions which approximate those we should like to find existent in psychological experiments. For instance, a young lady in psychoanalysis reported the following experience: On a hot summer evening, when she was in the vaguely excitable and restless mood many women feel just before menstruation, she had gone to the cinema. The picture had already begun, and in the darkness she took the first seat to which the usher led her. A few minutes later she felt a man's hand gently caressing her bare arm. Of course she got up immediately and took a distant seat, but for the length of a few seconds she had felt an intense sexual excitement. She could not have seen the man. The psychological value of the experience is impaired by the fact that the sexual excitement was checked in its initial phase. Since it seems that the human sex-drive presents itself in an already complicated figure to the psychological observer, it appears hopeless to expect from questionnaires information which might be helpful. The sexual activity of children, of primitive tribes, of individuals who are not very strongly influenced by the culture-pattern in which we live appear to be the best available sources of information for a psychological study of the sex drive; but here



again we are handicapped by the scarcity and restricted value of obtainable information.

In discussing the sexual problem we generally neglect to consider that sex is not the same as it was thousands of years ago. Of course the crude drive is the same, but its manifestations have been subjected to many changes. There was a time when the sex-drive had a purely periodical character, as with animals, in being limited to seasons of heat. It followed the rhythm of the organic world, the same law which governs the change of being awake and asleep, of hunger and satisfaction, the cycle of ebb and flow. Culture favors an arrhythmical course, but it cannot entirely eliminate the previous character. Even now the sex-drive has kept something of its original nature. Prehistoric changes in environment, in climate, in the surface revolution of the earth, and in food—all these must have influenced the sexual habits of men. There are other changes enforced upon these habits not by life outside men, but by forces within them, continuations, or rather internalizations, of those other changes, for man models himself after the pattern of the surrounding world. Thus sex had originally the character of a fight, in which the woman was rather raped than embraced. In her fight the prehistoric female—you hesitate to say "woman"—would bite the aggressive caveman on the neck. There is a long way from the teeth to the lips, from the bite to the kiss. We shall follow it later on.

We do not eat any more like the Cro-Magnon man. We are not cannibals, nor do we tear raw meat from animals and devour it. We do not eat roots from the ground as he did, and we do not eat in the same way. Man's appetite for food has changed in its proportion, in its desire, and in its expressions and so has his sexual appetite. We need be reminded of only one of the transformations which at first was caused by external factors, but which later on was aided by emotional determinants. The sex-drive received new stimuli as women began to dress. A nonsexual factor changed the character of the desired object. In an impressive scene in *Penguin Island* Anatole France has described what a revolutionary metamorphosis was brought about when women appeared for the first time with clothes on—you would rather say covered than dressed. This and other changes must have taken



place in the many hundred thousand years which made man the slightly domesticated animal we know now. Not the nature of the crude sex-drive, but the conditions and expressions of its excitement were transformed. There is a great change from its most primitive forms to its manifestations today, a change best characterized by the difference in the way we look at the object, a distinction marked at its beginning by the figure of any female and at its end by that of the one beloved woman. Apparently every man must repeat this long historical procedure in his individual development:

A fool there was and he made his prayer  
    (Even as you and I)  
To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair  
    (We called her the woman who did not care)  
But the fool he called her his lady fair  
    (Even as you and I).

But is there not in what Rudyard Kipling says in those ungal-lant verses a development similar to that in religion? Did not God become transformed from the image of a vicious tribal chief to the highest idea man knows? Does not Jehovah sometimes still appear as a jealous and revengeful tyrant? It is really not polite to look at a woman, any woman, with so little respect as is shown in Kipling's verses. A writer who was greater than Kipling, Balzac, once showed to a friend a crude fetish-figure from the South Sea Islands. When the visitor made some derogatory remarks about the little primitive image, Balzac cautioned him: "Hush! How do you know it is not God?" How do you know that this woman, this poor wench whom you deride, is not the goddess for one or for many men?

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## *The Confusion of Love and Sex*

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YOU REMEMBER that of the three sources which constitute the happiness of John and Jane—love, ego-gains, sex-gratification—we chose sex as the first object of our research because we were told that love is only an aim-inhibited form of sex. Modern science, especially psychoanalysis, gave us this information. The sex-drive, according to Freud, has been diverted from its original goal or has been inhibited in reaching it. The result is love. This emotion remains sexual in its character, at least unconsciously, however desexualized it may seem to be.

Such a statement became possible for Freud and his pupils by the extension of the word sex. It contains much more meaning for them than for the average man and woman. Sex life includes in their view all feelings and activities which have their origin in the primitive sex urge. The conviction of Freud that love, affection, and friendship are also sexual in their origin and nature was founded on the experience that in so-called pure love sexual tendencies can also be discovered as unconsciously operating. The existence and effect of such aim-inhibited sexual strivings can also be found in the tenderness of parents to children, of sons and daughters for their parents, in the friendship between two persons of the same sex. It is not true, as the enemies of psychoanalysis assert, that sex plays a disproportionate part in Freud's theory. If the idea of sex is enlarged to include tenderness, affection, vanity, ambition, and many ego-drives, the part does not appear exaggerated. The question is only whether such an inclusion is possible.

How else than by expanding the meaning of sex could Freud



have contributed to prove that love is essentially sexual in its origin and nature, is nothing but a carbon-copy of sex? Certainly not by the use of the word sex before psychoanalysis. People have always differentiated between love and sex, and they still make a sharp distinction between them. Only in psychoanalysis the word extended its meaning and became a hodge-podge expression. Whether you feel a deep affection or a fleeting sexual itching towards a woman, psychoanalysis calls her your sexual object.

To the same unjustified and unjustifiable extension was the word libido subjected. It originally meant the energy of the sex-drive, and nothing else. For Freud it also took on the meaning of the emotional power of affection and tenderness directed towards a person, towards several persons, and even towards abstract ideas. Freud had, like Procrustes in Greek mythology, an inclination to extend and to stretch a term until it fitted his idea. Such behavior is comparable to the attitude of the stubborn opponent with whom Abraham Lincoln had once to argue :

"Well, let's see," said Lincoln to this farmer, "how many legs has a cow?"

"Four, of course," was the quick answer.

"That's right," said Lincoln. "Now suppose we call the cow's tail a leg. How many legs would the cow have?"

"Why, five, of course."

"Now that's where you are wrong," argued Lincoln.

"Simply calling a cow's tail a leg does not make it a leg."

Similarly, calling love and tenderness a form of sex does not make them sexual. Identifying affection and sex by using the same name for both does not make them the same.

Freud, however, warned his followers and students not to take the word sex in the old literal meaning of the term. He tried again and again to convince them that in psychoanalysis all the feelings of affection and devotion are included in the new meaning. For some time he preferred to speak of "psychosexuality" in order that he might not be misunderstood to have meant the primitive sex-desire. The attempt was vain. The word proved stronger than Freud's will to change its connotation. This deep-sea fisher threw a wide net into the ocean of the human soul. He hoped to



catch too many big fish in a single haul: sex, love, tenderness, friendship. But what he netted was only sex. The others escaped through the wide meshes of the net.

For the psychiatrists and psychologists who followed Freud the differences between sex and love quickly became infinitesimal and finally disappeared. A witty Viennese writer once said in regard to a government official: "He takes such small bribes that he is almost incorruptible." In a similar manner, the shift from the Freudian meaning of the word sex back to the original connotation of the word came so imperceptibly that an effort had to be made in order to remember it had meant something else for Freud. He skirted around the problem of love in assuming that it was an appendix to sex. Thus he really made an effort not to get to the problem but to get rid of it. The effect was not so much to solve the question as to keep it under cover. To the psychoanalysts affection appeared to be only a poor facsimile of sexual desire. They had no difficulty in by-passing the problem; their theoretical blinders prevented them from seeing it. The few who were aware of its existence hoped that it would disappear if they permanently looked away. An original idea could not be inserted, even edgewise, into their consolidated system. Love is sex minus sex and that is all.

Does the fact that Freud found traces of unconscious sexual wishes in tenderness and friendship prove his point? There is also air in a desk. Will you, then, say that the desk is made of wood and air? That love is so often united and fused with sex does not prove that they are similar in nature. Affinity does not mean identity. You can be the pal of another person without resembling him. You can be familiar with a man not of your family.

Between love and sex there are differences of such a decisive nature that it is very unlikely they could be, as psychoanalysts assert, of the same origin and character. These differences are best realized when both phenomena are contrasted in their purest form. Here are a few examples: sex is a biological urge, a product of chemistry within the organism; love is an emotional craving, the creation of individual imagination. In sex there is a drive to get rid of an organic tension; in love there is a need to escape from the feeling of one's own inadequacy. In the first there is a quest

for physical satisfaction; in the second there is a pursuit of happiness. One concerns the choice of a body; the other, the choice of a personality. Sex has a general meaning; love, a personal one. The first is a call from nature; the second, from culture. Sex is common to men and beasts; love or romance was unknown for thousands of years to men and is unknown to millions of people even now. Sex is indiscriminate; love is directed to a certain person. The one relaxes muscles; the other opens the floodgates of personality. Also the sexually satisfied individual can feel love-starved. The sex-drive is extinguished in an act; there is a tension, a spasm, and a release. The ultimate act of pleasure cannot later be remembered, just as the taste of a particular food cannot vividly be recalled. No such ultimate indifference to the object is to be observed in the phenomenon of love. Every word and every gesture of your sweetheart is deliciously remembered. Sex is dramatic; love is lyric. The object of sex is desired only during the short time of excitement and appears undesirable otherwise; the beloved person is the object of continued tenderness.

In discussing the lure of the object, I discriminate between its sex appeal and its personality appeal. The two are clearly separated in fact, not merely in description. The first disappears after the sexual act. After you have done it, you have done with it for the time being. The other appeal is of a permanent nature. Many men, and quite a few women, confuse these two claims, yet they present divergent aspects to self-observation. When sex and love are united and turned to the same object, it is sometimes difficult to know which of the two needs has the lion's share, but usually they can be separated clearly in our perception.

How was it possible that the Freudian theory, which declared love to be a kind of washed-out sexual urge, was so willingly accepted? Why was not the long overdue argument brought forward that this theory leads to a disastrous confusion and to unsound conclusions? The answer does no credit to many psychiatrists and psychologists. There was, first, the tradition of philosophy and medical teaching to overcome. It was precisely on this point that Freud was neither original nor imaginative. The authority of most philosophers from Plato to Schopenhauer, of most physicians from Greek antiquity to the psychiatrists of our



day gave support to the view that love is essentially sexual in its origin and nature, an emotional descendant of the sex-drive. There was, second, an aversion, quite natural with physicians, to the raptures of poets and lovers who saw in love a supernatural or metaphysical phenomenon, not of this earth and mysterious in its nature. There was, last but not least, no other reasonable theory that could explain this feeling and why it is in most cases so intimately connected with sex. The existence of these three factors explains why the theory of Freud remained uncontradicted so long. The too great respect for authority and tradition in psychiatry and philosophy cannot be excused when we meet with it among research workers and critical investigators. The insistence that love originates in emotional processes and is an object of psychological inquiry is of course justified. The fear that psychology as a sober science might come into contamination with the lofty theories of poets appears superfluous. The absence of any other valid psychological theory about the origin and character of love was unfortunate; it was indeed a fact we psychologists ought to be ashamed of.

The situation remained unchanged until neo-psychoanalysis emerged. I gave this tentative name to a renewal of psychoanalysis, a renewal which at the same time means a revision and revaluation of many of Freud's theories. Neo-psychoanalysis is in certain directions a continuation of Freud's work; in others, a substitution for it.<sup>1</sup> It is a revolution within a revolution. It was not accidental that neo-psychoanalytic research started with the study of the origin and character of love as differentiated from and contrasted with sex. We shall return to this subject after we have discussed Freud's libido theory, the amazing misinterpretation psychoanalysis has presented to the world. Here Freud made a magnificent mistake. Fertile, but not creative, many of his pupils, following in the footsteps of their master, have made psychoanalytical literature the richest source we possess of misinformation about sex and love. They observed many facts which are incontrovertible. Many of them represent coincidence, but evidence has to be examined. It is to be admitted that many psychoanalysts are almost as

<sup>1</sup> A forthcoming book, *The Emergence of Neo-psychoanalysis*, by Theodor Reik, will make the new concept clear.



conscientious as Freud although they observe much less. After having gathered their facts, they order and interpret them as they will. The presentation of the final result often gives you the impression that they obeyed the advice of Mark Twain: "Get your facts first and then you can distort them as much as you please." It is not sufficient that the connection of two or more facts *means* something. It has also to *be* something.

The picture of human relations as the psychoanalysts present it is one of distorted proportions. It resembles the representation of a person in the convex and concave mirrors into which the visitors at amusement parks look. Is this you in the mirror? It is you, but fantastically disfigured and deformed—enormously fat or extremely thin, much too tall or much too short, with gigantic legs or hands—you as a dwarf or as a Goliath. The psychoanalytical mirror shows human nature as grotesquely sexual. It is not the existence of sex which appears questionable, but the psychological evaluation it has been given, the emotional importance attributed to it. Facts need not be important by themselves; they gain their significance in connection with other facts. The sexual facts which psychoanalysis finds are often undeniable; but they appear irrelevant, immaterial and inconsequential in regard to the problem as long as they concern only the crude sexual needs.

It is not questionable that the elementary sex-drive which operates without distinction of persons is a power which moves the world. No regression to the views of the era before Freud is here intended, but a differentiation which new psychological research necessitates. The psychologist, who reexamines the analytical theories on sex, finds himself in the situation of a person who tries in vain to do a jigsaw puzzle. Many pieces fit together but many others don't. The difficulty is removed when we realize that there are pieces which belong to another puzzle and which have to be discarded. Our first task is to put these pieces aside. They were originally in another box and got mixed up by mistake with the pieces of this particular puzzle.

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## *The Split Between Sexuality and Tenderness*

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ERNEST RENAN declared that only few people have the right to criticize the theological system of the Catholic Church, for only few know and understand what amount of wisdom and cleverness, of penetrating ingenuity was used in building it. For the same reason, only the few people who have spent many years of study on the subject are capable of a critical judgment about Freud's libido theory. If the fundamental ideas have been accepted, especially the enlarged concept of sex, it is extraordinarily difficult to unscramble the confusion which results from these original misconceptions. ("Myself when young did frequently frequent Doctor . . .") Nevertheless a spring cleaning of ideas becomes very necessary.

The critical revision of Freud's theory on sex, as it appears here, is not undertaken for its own sake. There is not much sense in criticism if it is not constructive and if something better cannot be offered in the place of the wrong concept. In this book only those parts of the libido theory are discussed for which these conditions can be now fulfilled. Let me add that my uncompromising opposition to Freud's concept of sex and love does not change my view that he was one of the greatest psychologists of all times.

The relation between sexuality and tenderness presents a problem of special importance and interest: A normal attitude in love life is possible only if two currents unite, if the tender and the sexual impulses meet in the same object. Much of the unhappiness and misery in the relationship between the sexes is due to the failure to reach this union. The split between sexuality and tenderness is the cause of many difficulties in married life. It has occupied



the attention of the psychologists, especially in the conspicuous manifestations of the impotence of men and the frigidity of women. Freud discussed the origin and nature of this split several times. Of the two currents, he asserts, the tender one is the older and is directed to the persons of the family and to those who take care of the child. The first love-objects become, then, the first sexual objects—the mother, the nurse, the older sister. Later on the sexual drive meets the incestuous inhibition.

While the young man's unconscious fantasies are occupied with those objects, forbidden by the tabu of incest, he cannot function sexually with women who remind him of mother or sister. He becomes impotent, or his sexual potency is unsteady and capricious, because something in a woman reminds him of the forbidden persons. That part of his sexual desire which remained intact turns now to objects who are socially and otherwise remote, who do not belong to the group of persons thought of as mother and sister substitutes. The consequence of such an avoidance in thought is the degradation of the object. In other words, the man can function sexually only with women he looks down upon and for whom he has contempt, while he is impotent with women whom he respects and whom he considers as equal to his mother and sister. When he takes a woman of this latter group as sex-object, he has to degrade her in his thoughts or fantasies in order to make her possible as an object of sexual gratification. The attempt to unite the sexual and tender demands is often a failure. Freud traces psychical impotence back to the non-meeting of sexual and tender striving. The inhibition observed in the adult results from the child's fixation on his first objects and proves later in life the power of the influences which once checked the first incestuous wishes of the boy. An analogous conclusion regarding the sexual frigidity of women—the number of women in our civilization who do not "feel" during sexual intercourse is terrifying—is certainly justified, because their failure is psychologically the same as the noisier one of impotent men. There is not much need felt by women to degrade the sexual object, but in their thoughts they connect sexual activity with something forbidden and thus cannot dissolve the tie between prohibition and sexuality.



The condition of degradation with men corresponds to the effect of concealment with women.

This theory of Freud is the best which has been offered to us to explain many puzzling traits of the sexual life of men and women. It is certainly not the best which can be obtained. It simplifies the psychological situation in reducing its essence to the emotional consequences of the incest-inhibition. It does not take into account that other emotional factors contribute to the dissociation of tenderness and sex, factors which we shall discuss later on. The incest-tabu is too weak a bridge to carry this great burden. We contradict this theory also on the ground, which Freud assumes, that love or tenderness is older than the sexual instinct, for we think that love is a guest who comes rather late to the banquet of human needs. We would also point out that the demands of the ego-drives are not considered in this Freudian concept.

I shall restrict myself here to the revaluation of the theory on its own ground: that of the incest barrier, which to Freud appears solely responsible for the failure and for the degradation of the sexual object. For Freud and the psychoanalysts the Oedipus situation is the template which molds most of the vicissitudes of the sexual life of adults. I do not question strong influences of this kind, but I do deny that they are only of a sexual nature. Sex appeared to us as a primitive, biochemically determined need of a purely physical character, best compared to the other vital needs of the child to eat, to breathe, to eliminate. The sexual manifestations of the infant are certainly not the first to which mothers and nurses pay attention. There are more urgent ones connected with the welfare of the child. The education of the child begins with a concern, not for the genitals, but for the bladder and sphincter. The child has to learn to control them to a certain extent. In this task, education will have its earliest successes and failures. The child at first obeys these drives as he feels their urge, but later he has to learn to eliminate faeces and urine at a certain time and at a certain place.

The kind of attention, the inhibitions and prohibitions which are put on these functions by mother and nurse, will set a pattern

also in other directions of behavior. At first the child soils everything. He prefers even to soil the persons he likes and to be cleansed by these persons. Then comes an important change. Mother seems to be unwilling to be soiled, and she becomes displeased if the child befouls her, himself, or his dress. She educates the child to fulfill these functions only where she wants and when she wants. Pressure is now placed on the natural wants of the child, who must make an effort to restrict his needs to certain times and places.

Even now, in spite of all research, biologists and psychologists know little about the nature of the sex-drive. The nearest we can come to an understanding of its character can be made clear by comparing it with the processes of excretion. It is significant that the sexual organs are in the neighborhood of the excretory organs and are anatomically intimately connected with them. Freud quotes, justifiably: *Inter faeces et urinas nascimur*. But we are not only born there; we also live there. The functions of excretion remain important. Toilet training is not only one of the first educational influences the child experiences, but it also shapes the pattern for many reactions connected with other physical needs. The manner in which mothers and nurses react to failures of the child to control these urges will make a deep impression on the child. Similar negative reactions will meet the first expressions of the vague but strong sex-drives of the infant later on.

The persons surrounding the child not only refuse to be soiled but they also show very strong opposition toward the child who does not comply with their wishes regarding the time and place of excretion. These persons will also treat the playing of the child with his own sexual organs as they did his interest in his excretory organs and functions. The child begins to identify the organs of excretion and of sex as if they belonged to the same zone, as indeed biology teaches us they originally did. Even in the theories which children build about the mysterious sexual activity of grown-ups the processes of excretion are often confused or mixed with the crudely sexual. Faint echoes of such an infantile concept can be observed late in life. Consider, for instance, de Maupassant's definition of marriage as "*un changement des mauvaises*



*humeurs pendant le jour and des mauvaises odeurs pendant la nuit."*

Toilet-training thus becomes the forerunner of sexual training. It is the template for sexual inhibitions and forebodings. It is one of the first taboos of the child. The sexual taboo does not follow it in time only. It also follows the pattern of toilet-training as a wanderer steps into the impressions in the snow which a predecessor has made. It is psychologically significant that the activities of sex and of excretion are usually considered indecent and are kept secret. The pattern value of excretional education and toilet-training for the later sex-life is thus given. Mother and sister, and, in later displacement, the other members of the family, become untouchable just as they became unsoilable before. These persons showed first reactions of disapproval and disgust to the unwilling or unashamed child, and the little boy or girl will experience similar reactions when he approaches these persons with his childish sexual intentions. They become unapproachable.

The emotions of shame and secrecy, first learned by the child in the realm of excrements, will be displaced to the new field. Toilet-training thus lays the groundwork for later sexual difficulties. Bedroom intimacies are psychologically to be considered followers of toilet intimacies, in regard to which the child is first taught modesty. Whatever secrecy and shame attach to sexual life are the consequence of these earlier reactions. They become so generalized eventually that they concern not only the excretion processes but also the nude body in general, and are even extended to thought and speech about the sexual functions. In some cases they are extended to a realm which is only superficially connected with the original one. It was said about a modest lady that she blushed even when she changed her mind.

Toilet-training thus paved the way for the difficulties of the Oedipus situation which the psychoanalysts consider to be the only source of all vicissitudes of sex. They forget that the vital functions of secretion molded the pattern for sex-behavior long before the Oedipus situation descended on the child. To trace all difficulties back to this one origin is arbitrary, less a scientific statement than an insult to our intelligence.

The tabu of early sexual activity is a renewal of this earlier

tabu. At first the sex-drives turn, of course, to the same persons. The child has no sexual "object-choice," as the analysts think. His sex-drive takes the nearest persons of his environment as objects and so has to wrestle with the difficulties met before. What has to be explained is not that the child's sex-drive turns to mother and sister, but the nature of the inhibition in the approach. Here are the same persons from whom the child has already experienced rejection, reproach, and signs of disgust; here are the same persons who were untouchable for a different cause. The separation of sex and affection has its origin here.

The affectionate feelings of the child remain with the members of the family, but they are now strictly divorced from sexual drives. These can be directed only to strangers who are not—or not to the same extent—forbidden objects. While mothers and sisters are unapproachable persons before whom the child is ashamed of his excretional and later of his sexual needs, they remain objects of tenderness. Indeed, sometimes love-objects are chosen in their image because of some resemblance in appearance and character to these familiar persons. A naïve peasant girl in Austria complained once to her mother: "You had it easy; you married father, but I am supposed to marry a stranger." This complaint concerns only the difficulty which the girl felt in loving a stranger. It is not to be supposed that she meant it would be easier to have sex relations with her father. She might very much wish to marry him, to have his tender companionship, but not any sexual community. The sense of familiarity which the individual acquires towards members of his first social circle often thus determines the choice of a love-object. Such familiarity, however, can be an unconscious handicap in the sexual sense. The very fact that a person reminds a man of mother and sister can often have a forbidding or inhibiting influence upon his sexual potency.

True enough, the incest-tabu is also operative here, but behind it is the older inhibition on excretion, which unconsciously has become part and parcel of the sexual inhibition. In the analysis of frigid women one can often observe that the sexual difficulty expresses itself in the inability to "make a man wet," as if sexual secretions were identical with others. Thus the infantile inhibition repeats itself in the sexual field. A displaced shame and anxiety,



unconsciously rooted in the effects of toilet-training, is here clearly displaced to a neighboring realm.

Psychologists have to differentiate between love-difficulties and sex-difficulties. Sex-difficulties are renewals of the troubles which the child originally had with toilet-training and with the persons governing the child's education. The tabus introduced earlier in order to instill cleanliness and neatness became prototypes for the sexual behavior of men and women. Not only do the persons who were forbidden objects in connection with excretion later on become untouchable as incestuous objects, but the excretory processes themselves also become patterns for sexual activity. Here is the origin of the puritanical view of sex and of the fact that often similar expressions were used for both functions (purity in sex, sex as polluting, as something unclean, "dirty stories"). Chastity has, so to speak, its prototype in tidiness. The headmaster of Eton closed one of his sermons at the time when Disraeli was a pupil there with the words: "Now, boys, be pure in heart, for if not I shall flog you till you are." We arrive thus at the conclusion that he who spares the rod in toilet-training will never experience the joy of seeing his children pure in heart, although it is doubtful that he will reach this aim anyway.

The molding influence of toilet-training on the sexual attitude conditions not only the relationship of persons but also, and more so, the functioning in sex. The inhibitions are carried over to the new sphere in the psychology of impotent men and frigid women who consider sex as something degrading, like urine and faeces, as something to be ashamed of as they were made to be of those other functions in their childhood.

This pattern governs the processes of reticence and freedom, keeping back and letting go, holding out and surrendering in the intimate activities of sex, as it did in elimination. It is, to a great extent, responsible for the split between love and sex which many men experience: where they respect, they cannot function sexually, and where they can enjoy themselves uninhibitedly in sex, they cannot respect their partners. Persons whom they consider as mother and sister substitutes become sexually untouchable because the old excretion-tabu unconsciously conquers the sexual desire and makes these respected persons inappropriate as sex-objects.

Reverence for them checks sexual wishes; they are pure and cannot be polluted. Of other women you need not be ashamed; they are not respected and can in no sense be compared to mother and sister.

If this attitude of sexual avoidance of mother and sister representatives is displaced and generalized, psychical impotency towards all women results. In many cases men differentiate unconsciously between women for respect and women for lust, between those you could imagine being in bed with and those you could not think of in this way. Love produces a new category which is beyond such a differentiation and which creates an object in whom sexual and tender wishes unite. The dichotomy is then overcome. A new power has swept away the old conflicts and difficulties.

The Oedipus situation is the heir of an earlier conflict which creates a barrier before the sex-drive is even strong enough to express itself. The process in toilet-training will model the individual attitude to sex later on. Shame, insecurity, and fear will reappear, returning from the nether world. We do not deny the validity of the concept of incest barrier. We deny its value as the only possible explanation of the separation between sex and tenderness.

The theme of the conflict between sex and affection, which we meet here for the first time, will reappear in following chapters. A story which circulated in the Vienna of the twenties illuminates the situation: A man, a bit tipsy, returned with his friend at break of day from a party. He said suddenly that he wanted to visit a brothel. The friend became indignant and reproached him that he, a married man, should want to visit a prostitute. But the other said furiously, "See what a rascal you are! Do you really think I would wake up my dear wife at three in the morning to save a few crowns?" In this paradoxical story the sex-drive not only appears entirely dissociated from tenderness and as a power in its own right, but in emphasized contrast to it.



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## *A Junction*

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A PERSON who is nearly starving does not ask for particular dishes but for something to eat. Thus the human sex-drive, if it is aroused, is ready to take everything within its reach as object. We have no word—really there is no word—to designate this attitude. If we had one, it would mean the same as *omnivorous*, all-devouring, in the realm of eating. (Let us hope that a kind destiny will prevent the coining of a term like *omnilibidinous*, which would be the nearest equivalent.) Let us assume the existence of a method of exciting the crude sex-drive—let us say by permanent local mechanical stimulation or by the influence of certain aphrodisiac drugs. The individual so stimulated would then accept any means to rid himself of an urge which would become intolerable. The drive appears thus to be rather a push away from something than a pull toward something—an attempt to escape from the organic pressure.

Of course the sex-drive will later on choose objects, and it is natural that they should be the nearest to the child. Here is the opportunity to re-examine the role and importance of the so-called Oedipus situation. As is well known by now, this situation is characterized by the sexual desire of the little boy for his mother and by hateful impulses against the father who is considered as a rival, as a disturber and intruder. Both these attitudes are unconscious. The facts again need not be discussed. The Oedipus situation can be observed in its psychological repercussions in any child growing up in our culture-pattern, and its survivals can be seen by any trained psychologist in the symptoms and fantasies of neurotic and of normal persons.

The interpretation of the facts which Freud discovered has to be discussed, and so has the importance which he attributes to them. Here also we have to differentiate between primitive sexual impulses of the little boy and his affectionate and possessive tendencies. In a certain phase of his development both are directed to his mother, but the crude sexual impulses, as such, have decidedly not the emotional importance which Freud attributes to them in this situation. They alone would never lead to the Oedipus situation. The child's possessiveness and jealousy, the passion which he sometimes reveals and which is soon covered up and repressed, is of course due to his affection for his mother. Not the sexual drive in its elementary expression, but its combination with tenderness and the will to own the object can be called responsible for the jealous and revolutionary tendencies of the child against the father.

Early rivalry and competition are likewise due to the power of the ego-drives of the child, to the beginning struggle for independence, to his will to conquer, and to his wish to be appreciated. He wants to have his way, and when it concerns his mother his fight for her favor and his insistence that he be favored seem to indicate that he may have his way with the ladies later on in life. Again we find a situation in which the misuse of the word sex distorts the presentation of typical facts in the emotional life of the child.

The importance which the Oedipus situation gains in the concept of psychoanalysis is comparable only to that of the omnipresence of a divine being in religious faith. The Oedipus complex, according to psychoanalysts, is not only always there but also is always unconsciously effective. It penetrates unconsciously almost every human activity. We are reminded of Jehuda Hale's pious question: "O God, where are you and where are you not?" As a matter of fact, the Oedipus situation has its importance only as a transition phase through which every child in our culture pattern passes. It is, to use a commonplace comparison, like a railroad junction through which all trains, coming from different stations and going in different directions, have to pass. It is at this point of the child's emotional development that sexual drives



and tendencies from the ego-side meet. Many psychoanalysts confuse this junction with the end of the line. When they arrive at the station, these conductors, in their self-deceiving zeal, order the passengers: "All out."

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## *The Confusion of Sex and Ego-Drives*

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IT IS A pity that there is no adequate word for the energy of the sex-drive. *Sensuality* is too broad. The scientific expression is *libido*. Better expressed, it was *libido* because the unjustified enlargement of the expression by psychoanalysis has now made the word unserviceable.

When Freud built his first theories on sex, the meaning of *libido* had not yet been expanded to include love, affection, and interest. Therefore a great part of the present libido theory can be considered as the history of the individual sex-development as Freud sees it.

This is not the place to re-examine all concepts of this theory. Only a few of these ideas will be briefly discussed here. Freud showed us that children are sexual beings, and it is one of his many merits that he gave the sex-life of the child its place among the subjects of psychological research. He observed different expressions of infantile sexuality; that is, he observed many neglected and interesting reactions of the child which are interpreted as sexual. Are they sexual? That is the question here. He gave a place to infantile sexual life in the realm of psychology, but he exaggerated its importance so much that we have to put it in its place. Are the reactions of the child which Freud describes sexual and are they sexual only?

Freud recognized a variety of partial sex-urges which develop separately in childhood until finally they comprise the configuration of mature sexuality in the adult. One of the first manifestations, he says, is the sucking of the baby. The rhythmical sucking by babies of their hands, toes, or other parts appears to Freud to



be a means by which the child attains sexual satisfaction. This process, carried out with manifest concentration, leads either to sleep or to a reaction somewhat like an orgasm. The lips of the child behave sexually like sensitive erogenic zones. At first, the satisfaction of this erogenic zone is united with the gratification of the need for food. Sexual activity at first finds support in a function which aids in the preservation of life, but becomes independent of the function later on. Freud sums up his concept as follows: "Whoever sees a child sinking back from the breast saturated, with red cheeks, and blissfully smiling, will have to admit that this image will also be determining the expression of sexual satisfaction in later life." I have seen the spectacle many times, and it reminds me much more of a man sinking back into his chair after he has drunk a bottle of excellent wine and eaten a delicious dinner. I have tried to evoke the other, the sexual picture, but it seems artificial. I had to force my imagination, while the image of the man who has dined and wined appears spontaneously. The comparison may seem far-fetched but I cannot help it.

This is only a single yet a representative instance of the psychological misinterpretations of the libido theory. The facts are there, they cannot be doubted. What can be doubted, indeed what has to be doubted, is the interpretation which psychoanalysts give to them. They put wrong labels on them.

Freud asserts that the sexuality of the child shows the characteristics of the sexual perversions in all their primitive forms and expressions. The child is, in Freud's view, *polymorph-perverse*. A child, however, cannot be called polymorph-perverse because that means that you transfer a term valid only for the sexuality of adults to a field where it cannot be used. You can just as well call a baby who soils his diapers untidy or a new-born babe who sucks at his mother's breasts a drunkard. In cases like this psychoanalysts succumb to the temptation of analogy.

Freud asserts that the sexuality of the infant is at first linked with the needs of life-preservation and that it will be separated from them later on, but the important point here is that these needs are there first and prevent other needs from appearing so long as they have the predominant role. There is no doubt that even in

the short life of a day-fly a relatively considerable time passes before the sexual need awakens.

The need for food, the urges to urinate and defecate, and other organic needs govern the life of the child much more than the sex-drive. These are the ego-drives which protect and preserve existence, which prepare the individual for the struggle of life, and which are more vital and urgent for the infant than sex. It is very unlikely that nature should give such a predominant part to the sex-drive before the individual is able to live independently.

The phases which Freud described in the sexual development of the child can as well, and much better, be characterized as phases of ego-development. Take, for example, the pregenital sexual phase called cannibalistic, in which—to quote Freud—the “sexual-activity is not yet separated from the absorption of food.” The object of one activity, he feels, is also that of the other; the sex-aim is incorporation of the object. But why not emphasize the fact that the cannibalistic phase is rather one of the ego-drives, an effort to take the object into oneself as we do in eating? I do not see any necessity for calling the tendency of the child to put everything into his mouth a sexual one. The aim, in this instance, is certainly that of eating. The next phase is the sadistic one. Activity is now directed towards a person who will be the object of aggression and cruelty, but can you call such an instinctive drive especially sexual in its character? It could also have a sexual aim. It need not have it. The cruelty and aggression which exists in the child need not be interpreted in this way. Would it not be more adequate to say that vague sex stirrings sneak later into the realm of the possessive and aggressive impulses? In the third phase, the sex-life of the child is already determined by the predominance of the genital zone. His feelings are then almost the same as those of men and women.

I do not deny that the “pregenital” phases of the child’s development may also have some vague sexual undertones, but they are unimportant and negligible in comparison with the meaning which they derive when connected with the ego-drives. Of course, if you enlarge the meaning of the word sex to such an extent that it also contains the activity of, and the activity with, the anal and urinary zones, then you can find a sexual significance in many



feelings of the child. But it is rather to be supposed that the sex-drives are late derivatives of the biological necessity of excretion, and not the opposite. Also a certain process of breathing can so take on a sexual significance that you can call it a "respiratory orgasm" (I can speak Psychoanalese like the next psychiatrist), but I assert that breathing has, and retains, a much more vital need.

Of course, a lover in his paroxysm can wish to eat his mistress up, but eating had originally no sexual meaning, and the cannibalistic tribes of Central Australia did not make any sexual passes in devouring the white missionaries. The fact that little boys wish to be engine drivers need not mean that they want to enjoy sexual satisfaction in motion or that they get a sensual gratification from rapid motion. Is it not easier to suppose that they would enjoy the sense of moving quickly as a kind of extension of their own power of running, of their own celerity? Is not the child's interest in the excretory functions rather determined by the interest its parents take in these necessary biological processes than in his own sexual curiosity?

Freud and the psychoanalysts contend that the sexual character of all these phenomena becomes clear in the symptoms of the neuroses and psychoses of adults, in whom they appear as survivals of the child's sexual life. This interpretation is, of course, correct, if you transfer the extended sense of the word sex also into this realm and if you shut your ears to all objections to such an unjustified enlargement of the meaning. The facts which Freud observed are there, but they are misinterpreted and wrongly evaluated. Their importance within the individual life is tremendously exaggerated by the psychoanalysts who emphasize the sexual drive and neglect the impact of the ego-impulses. A reader of analytical books and papers sometimes gets the impression that self-preservation is not the first, but the second, and a secondary law of nature.

If sex, the urgent need to relieve an organic tension, would appear isolated, human life would be much simpler. There would be much fewer emotional conflicts and the libido theory would never have come into existence. Complication begins when sexual drives are merged with ego-tendencies.

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## *Byways*

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A DISPOSITION toward perversions lies, according to Freud's view, in the original character of the human sex drive.<sup>1</sup> Perversions are thus inborn compounds of sexuality. Normal sexual behavior develops by restrictions because of organic changes and physical inhibitions in the process of maturing. The powers of shame and disgust, and the inhibitions which education puts into the way of the child who was originally polymorph-perverse, operate as suppressive influences. It is obvious that the term *perversion* is a conventional one. I take as a crass instance the fantasy of a patient whose mother was dangerously ill. He sees his mother dead in her coffin and feels an intense impulse to bite the cold and white hand of the body. This impulse is accompanied by vivid feelings of sexual excitement. The patient expresses, of course, his extreme horror and depression at this compulsive thought, which makes him shudder, but he cannot doubt that it arouses him. That would be called a perverted fantasy, and if the patient should follow his impulse, we certainly would call him perverted.

We change the scene slightly and presume that the man feels the impulse to kiss the hand of his dead mother tenderly. This behavior we consider normal. We cannot deny that the kiss is nothing but a descendant of the bite, only its milder, mitigated form. The original aggressiveness is so far softened that the kiss becomes the expression of the opposite feeling of tenderness. We would not consider the kiss a perverted act.

<sup>1</sup> The work in which Freud has given his views on sexual perversions in his best formulations is the *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*, an impressive book, which will retain its value when many of its mistakes are corrected. It is based on insights about the nature of the sex-drive which were obtained in psychoanalysis of neurotics.



A careful and unprejudiced re-examination of the problem leads to a surprising question: are sexual perversions only sexual in their origin and nature? The answer is surprising too: they never are. We admit that Freud's theory is founded on excellent observations, but they are used as a springboard for diving into the dark. I believe that in all perversions, not sex, but the ego-drives are predominant. I admit that the original impulse is of a sexual nature, but it has met external or psychical hindrances on its way to its gratification and has had to yield its place for a shorter or longer time to the other drives, which alone can help to reach this original goal. I return here to the characterization of the sex-drive as an organic need to remove or at least to relax a purely physical tension, to get a somatic release. This elementary and crude drive can never be the source of the psychical energy which leads to the activities and fantasies of perverted persons. The most which an external hindrance can achieve is a stop, a delay. The energy which is necessary to overcome the frustration is secured by the ego-drives.

You can assume that sadism justifiably is labeled a sexual perversion. Sadism tends to humiliate or degrade the object, to overcome its resistance by violence, and to inflict pain and shame upon it. Let us admit that the child approaches the object with vague sexual impulses. He meets the unexpected resistance of the object, he finds hindrances in his way. The object or, if you like, the victim, does not want to be used in this way, he or she refuses to be a willing instrument or toy. Then the child increases his efforts, uses his energy, wants to overcome the resistance of the reluctant person, to enforce his will, and to achieve his object. He uses his physical strength to overcome the unwillingness of the person and to achieve his desire.

It is very possible that such a junction between sex-wishes and violence occurs when the resistance of the object is anticipated and overcoming it is imagined. The source of the satisfaction is thus a mixture of gratification of the sex- and of the ego-drives. Otherwise put: the sex-drive was arrested on the way to its goal and had to call on the older instinct for support. Now the older and more powerful aggressive impulses take precedence. If the aim is reached with their help, they have a considerable share in the

gratification which results. It is as if, to make a comparison, a little boy on the playground should want to carry out his will on another, resisting child and then, realizing that he cannot do it alone, calls on his older and stronger brother to force the opponent. Can you assert then that it was the first boy's own strength which overcame the resistance, that the result was reached by his own efforts?

The gratification derived from sadistic activity is to a great extent the satisfaction of aggressiveness. The psychoanalysts may now argue that it is precisely this aggressiveness which belongs to the very nature of sexuality, because without it the resistance of the object of sexual impulses cannot be broken. Such an argument, however, would be as meaningful as if one were to say that aggressiveness is inherent in hunger.<sup>2</sup> Hunger in itself is not aggressive. It can become aggressive if gratification is denied, from outside, but nothing in its nature points to any such immanent quality. The whole argument is founded on a preconceived idea about the character of sex which is no more justified than the claim of the little boy in our story that he alone had overcome his opponent unassisted.

If the fact is taken into account that the ego-drives are the older and more urgent ones and that the sexual impulses are junior partners which try to make themselves independent, the whole problem moves into a new field. Then the primacy of the drives is reversed: there is an original aggressive impulse towards the object, a tendency to take possession of it. This old drive assumes a new shade when sexual impulses awaken and join it. The aggressiveness in normal sexuality is of course restricted, but it can come to the foreground when the sexual approach is resisted. In the effort to overcome this resistance the lust for domination and violent conquest can be reawakened. Under these circumstances sadism would take the form of gratification by violence of an

<sup>2</sup> Freud really states that the sexuality of men has a compound of aggressiveness, of inclination to violence. Sadism corresponds thus to a sexual component which became independent, exaggerated and took the main role by displacement. (*Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*, Part I.) Would it not be more justifiable to assume that the original aggressiveness of men acquired a sexual component which later became independent, exaggerated and pretended to have the main role, although it cannot disavow its tie with its origin?



original ego-drive which had become focused upon a sexual object. In reaching its goal, the sexual component of a later date derives a considerable advantage and gains by the victory as did the younger boy by the success of his older brother.

But if this view is correct, the whole libido theory of Freud breaks down: the child does not appear as polymorph-perverse, sexuality has not the components of sadism, masochism, of peeping and showing off. The perversions are exaggerated manifestations of the old ego-drives, now directed to a sexual object. To return to our previous instance: the older brother who is on the playground is called by the younger one who cannot work his will on the third boy. The older brother, who realizes that his help is needed, knocks the opponent down, enjoys this act of violence thoroughly, and then walks away, allowing his younger brother to enjoy his share of the success.

That is the image sadism presents to me: the nature of its pleasure is really the lust for violent conquest, for domineering, for brute force, and this form of gratification is mixed with sexual enjoyment or is followed by it. This neo-psychoanalytical theory is just the reverse of Freud's view of the character of perversions and of the nature of infantile sexuality. Compare, for instance, the following contrasting pictures: Freud states that active muscular activity is a sexual need for the child, who gets extraordinary satisfaction from it. He then points out that a number of persons have reported that they experienced the first signs of excitement in their genitals while wrestling with their playmates. In this sport, of course, the skin of the contestants is brought into long and intimate contact. Inclination for muscular contest with a certain person will give the pattern for later verbal contests. (There is a German proverb which Freud quotes: "Who love each other tease each other.") Freud interprets this inclination as one of the good early symptoms of an object-choice directed to this person. He recognizes in the sexual excitement by muscular activity one of the roots of sadistic attitudes. The infantile junction between wrestling and sexual excitement becomes one of the determining factors for this preferred direction of the sex-drive. Modern education uses sport, he says, to a great extent

to divert youth from sexual activity or—he corrects himself—to substitute motion for sexual lust, to restrain sexual activity through the agency of one of its autoerotic components.

I would prefer to suppose that originally the enjoyment of muscular activity has for the child not the slightest sexual meaning and is an expression of his sense of power and efficiency. It is true that many boys have felt sexual excitement in wrestling, but the sexual stimulus is certainly not the motive for wrestling. It merely became mixed up with wrestling and is of a later origin. The sexual excitement is a late ingredient added to the satisfaction of the aggressive drives which are activated in the contest. Of course the same argument is valid for verbal contests, in which the enjoyment of mental activity is determined by the same factors. Sport might be used to distract youth from sexual interests, but this practice is not equivalent to reducing the sexual activity to one of its autoerotic compounds, but to leading it to the field of competitiveness, and thus to an expression of the ego-drives.

Freud states that the idea of sadism oscillates between an active and then a violent attitude towards the sexual object and that the sadist attains satisfaction exclusively through the submission and maltreatment of the object. Strictly speaking, he states, only this extreme case can properly be called a sexual perversion. Is that not an odd misinterpretation? Would such an extreme case not be better considered as an expression of aggressiveness and brutal possessiveness, and the sexual gratification connected with it as the waste-product which every great industry produces?

The origin of sadism is to be found in the elementary aggressive drives; its junction with the sexual impulses is secondary and a trait which may be entirely lacking. This is one of the cases in which the ego-urges become amalgamated with the sex-needs. This case occurs frequently when an intense sexual impulse meets strong resistance from its object or when other obstacles hinder it from reaching its aim. Here is an important dynamic development: at first, when the reaching of the sexual aim is inhibited, the person resorts to violence and cruelty to attain satisfaction. Later on, sexual gratification becomes so blended with the other that



violent or cruel fantasies or actions arouse sexual desire. Later on moral inhibitions within the person—fear and anxiety, for example—also function as such obstacles. To overcome them an aggressive and violent rage often develops, which treats the object as if it were itself the personification of the inhibition. The condition of the forbidden becomes then, as in all perversions, an increased stimulus. To have overcome the external and internal prohibitions and inhibitions increases the gratification. The resort to violence in breaking through a tabu then clearly proves that the sadistic impulse originated in the rebellious drives of the ego.

The inclination to peep and to watch for sexual excitement, is of the same nature; it is, so to speak, a milder form of sadistic behavior restricted to the eyes. To spy on an object originally means to take possession of it by observing it, and it need not have a sexual meaning. The specific lust in peeping at naked or undressing women is also, of course, an attempt to possess them visually because hindrances from outside or of a physical nature forbid an immediate sexual approach. This preparatory activity can become independent from the final goal of the sexual-drive and can be enjoyed as if it were itself an aim. The aggressive character of this spying is undeniable. It is, like sadism, an alloy of aggressive and sexual tendencies. It is obvious that here also the overcoming of an inhibition intensifies the satisfaction.

I need not deal extensively with the psychological character of masochism because I treated the subject in a book published four years ago.<sup>3</sup> I tried to demonstrate in that work that masochism is a detour to reach the same goals of aggressiveness, force and revenge as the sadistic impulses; and that it is not so much a counterpart of them as their inverted form, sadism upside down. It reaches its aim by a strange demonstration of the opposite. Its formula is best expressed by the words "victory through defeat." It reaches its concealed purpose by means of apparent passivity and pretended submission.

To make the character of this perversion clear, I shall present a single instance of a masochistic fantasy. Passing through a hotel lobby, a masochistic patient sees a WAC (member of the Women's Army Corps) in a chair with her legs crossed. He

<sup>3</sup> *Masochism in Modern Man*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1941.

imagines that if he were to be under her command, she would be an extremely severe superior, would scold and punish him physically, and might even kick him so hard that it would hurt. The emphasis seems thus to be on the feeling of submission and punishment, but this fantasy also arouses him sexually.

Later on, the patient remembers that at the end of this fantasy another image appeared, just as a kind of appendix. He had forgotten it because it was unimportant and of no consequence, scarcely worth mentioning. This neglected continuation of his fantasy had the following content: he saw for a fleeting moment the face of the same girl on a pillow. The expression was the one which women have in the "moment supreme" of orgasm, one of abandon and unrestricted surrender, her eyes glazed. The meaning of the fantasy is clear: "Even if you are severe with me and punish me, you will give yourself to me at the end, and there will come a moment when you will be soft and submissive." The masochistic enjoyment is due to the displacement of this final pleasure by a preceding phase. Such sojourn at preliminary actions and fantasies is a characteristic trait of all perversions.

Exhibitionism is a milder or mitigated expression of the same fundamental emotional drives which cause the masochistic attitude. It invites the other person to take possession of one's own body by means of looking, and is thus the detour by the road of passivity to the same unconscious aims which masochism tries to reach in its own particular manner.

In all these "sexual" perversions the ego factor is predominant. They are all called sexual merely because the ego-drives work in the sexual realm. The sexual drives alone prove unable to reach their aim and aggressiveness and possessiveness are called upon to force the way. As a secondary gain in the mixed gratification of both impulses the conquest of an inhibition may often be enjoyed; indeed the desire to do the forbidden becomes significant in all perversions. Stolen fruit is the sweetest. The more we know about the nature of the sexual drive, the stronger becomes our impression that it rarely appears as crude sex-desire and that its general manifestation is already blended with different drives of the ego-realm. Just the "sexual" perversions present the image of such a mixture, in which the proportion of lust for



domination and conquest in the gratification is greater than the purely sexual share.

The genius of Freud as a psychologist will in the days to come be more and more recognized and admired. His libido system, however, will, I am afraid, have the sad destiny which Herbert Spencer once bemoaned in speaking of "a beautiful theory that was murdered by a gang of brutal facts." Neo-psychoanalysis comes to the conclusion that the psychological research into the perversions is a study of violence and degradation, of fear and defiance rather than of sex. I know, of course, that the view here expressed is only a provisional hypothesis accounting roughly for the facts known to us, but I hope it accounts more satisfactorily for them than the outdated analytical theory, the shortcomings of which are obvious.

We have a final question: what is the relation of the perversions to love? I am of the opinion that perversions are aberrations of the impulses of aggressiveness and domination directed towards a sexual object. Their character is a blending of a large proportion of ego-drives with a minor quantity of sex-urge. Is there a place in this mixture for love, for tenderness and affection? Offhand, one would not think so. Nevertheless, analytical experience proves that such a strange alloy is possible. Frequently a certain adoration for the object can be united with the other two. It will then soften the sharp taste of brutal domination and will give a strange flavor to sexual satisfaction, a kind of tender or sweet after-taste. I know persons who appreciate such a mixture as a delicacy, but even they admit that it can be found very rarely and that it is more appetizing than nourishing.

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## *The Same Sex*

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THE LITERATURE on the problems of sex has enlarged to such an extent that an investigator who believes that he can make a contribution to the subject can never be certain whether the same view has not been published many times before. No single individual can know all of the printed material. Not priority but originality is the aim. The greater difficulty arises when he tries to forget at first everything he has read and heard before, and look at the phenomena as if he were meeting them for the first time, without prejudiced ideas.

This difficulty is immediately felt when one studies the problem of homosexuality. It starts with the very name. In the psychoanalytical concept homosexuality includes sexual relations with the same sex and affection or love for it. Psychoanalysts do not draw any sharp line between the sexual excitement a man feels in going to bed with a sailor he met half an hour before and the tender feeling this man has for his father or an admired teacher. Both are homosexual emotions, only the second one is aim-inhibited or deflected. Also admiration for great men, friendship, and fellowship are, in the best sense, sublimated homosexual expressions. The neo-psychoanalytical view discriminates sharply between these possibilities: it distinguishes between homosexuality and love or affection for the same sex as independent phenomena, and recognizes finally the possibility of a union of both emotions. In other words, it asserts that there are the same emotional possibilities in the relationships with the same sex as with the opposite sex, also the possibilities of a transition or of a conjunction. I would even go so far as to assume that a phenomenon analogous



to romance is possible between members of the same sex, especially in adolescence. Why should all these different relations, which are so distinct from each other in origin and character, be called homosexual?

Nobody denies that purely sexual relations with a person of the same sex are possible. Any psychologist knows many cases in which a man goes to bed with another man without any other than a sexual interest which immediately disappears with the physical release, leaving in its place indifference and, oftener, dislike and disgust. Moreover, nobody denies that feelings of companionship and friendship exist between men, without trace of sexual desire. But even if we were to admit that there are unconscious, repressed impulses of such a kind present, may they not be negligible and practically unimportant?

The differentiation which neo-psychoanalysis makes in the relationships between members of the same sex is not restricted to what they do and say. It reaches beyond words and actions into the wider domain of fantasies and thoughts. One man can think of another with warm feelings of friendship and with a great deal of emotional satisfaction. Another man can imagine sex relations with another and feel sensual stimulation only. It is to be admitted that there is a remarkable difference in the attitudes of the sexes: it happens but rarely that a woman feels only sexually excited by another woman, without any trace of tenderness for her, but it does happen.

The approach of psychoanalysis to the problem of homosexuality started from a biological point of view, from the fact of bisexuality, the organic disposition which exists in every individual and which unites the characteristics of both sexes. But bisexuality cannot be used as an explanation of homosexuality. It only makes an explanation possible. Let me make a comparison: to fly is possible only if there are airports and other equipment available on the ground. But the existence of airports is not the thing which makes the wings go off the ground. My comparison goes beyond this point: the possibility of flying did not start with the manufacture of aeroplanes, but before it, with the conceiving and inventing of an aircraft. The creative activity of the inventor is the main point in the history of flying. In the same sense I would

dare to say that the important thing in understanding the sexual and tender relations between the same sex is not the activities, but the fantasies which make these activities possible.

The biological facts have to be mentioned; but they are, psychologically considered, sterile. In studying the problem of love between members of the same sex it is best to turn away from the symptoms and behavior of "homosexuals," which are so conspicuous, and to pay attention first to the fantasies, which are frequently concealed, sometimes even from the very persons who have them.

This kind of psychological approach would, of course, be superfluous in analyzing crude sexuality, but it is the only possible one for the much more numerous cases in which the sexual urge combines itself with interest or affection. These, moreover, are the only cases which interest us here. We are dealing, not with sailors who for months do not enter a harbor, with prisoners and others who have no opportunity for normal sex, but with persons who have such a possibility yet prefer individuals of the same sex as love- and sex-objects.

Psychologists who are interested in the problem usually start with thoughts about the strange desire of a man who can go to bed with another man or of a woman with another woman. But, if you allow me the expression, that strangeness is true only in shabby, material reality. In the realm of fantasy a man never goes to bed with a man or a woman with a woman. That is to say, one of the two men plays the part of the woman and vice versa. Of course a change of role is possible and even usual, but there are always—consciously or unconsciously—two persons of the opposite sex present in fantasy. If one considers this situation, he will recognize that the biological differentiation of the sexes is *not* the explanation of the psychological problem, but the capacity of the imagination for playing the rôle of the other sex and for seeing the other person in this rôle. This problem has been—that is at least my impression—neglected by psychoanalysts until now. It has great complexities. The comparison with an aeroplane has its merit, but I must modify it: let me substitute a dirigible, a balloon, whose movements in the free air can be directed from the ground. It is not entirely independent and freely



flying. In other words, one of the persons in the homosexual union imagines that the other is a woman, but at the same time the true sexual identity is kept intact in the thought of the lover. The partner functions briefly and imaginatively as a woman, although the awareness that he is a man, an awareness temporarily submerged, remains.

The difficulty of accepting this explanation justifies another comparison which, I hope, will clarify the specific character of this imagination. At a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* the spectator sees Portia—she who has previously declared her plan to play a man's rôle—appear disguised as a man, and he derives pleasure from her performance. The spectator knows that Portia is a girl who acts the part of a man, and enjoys his knowledge. The girl walks and talks like a man (she has often rehearsed it); at the same time the spectator remains aware of the fact that she is only performing. Giving himself over to the illusion, yet knowing that it is an illusion, can secure a great pleasure for him. In the same sense, the homosexual imagines that his partner is a girl, although he knows, of course, that the partner is a man. As for himself, he can play the rôle of a girl in his imagination, although he knows, in spite of the power of fantasy at his disposal, that he is and remains a man. It amounts, for the vividly imaginative, to a highly artistic, very brief bit of play-acting before oneself. The feelings of such a man must be very alike to those of the actress when, as Portia, she plays a male part. The acting can be that of a virtuoso, but it can never be without the awareness that it is acting.

This equal role in homosexuality has escaped the observation of the psychologists. It did not escape the self-observation of homosexual persons. Of course this psychical situation is significant not only during the sex act but also of the general attitude of the homosexual. The same fantasy operates when the man is alone and becomes sexually excited: he imagines himself in the rôle of a woman or imagines another man in this rôle.

The existence of this fantasy leads up to an interesting question: is there such a thing as pure homosexuality? That is to say, is there a psychical attitude in which imagery of this kind is entirely lacking, in which a man desires a man—or a woman, a

woman—without this imaginary metamorphosis? Undoubtedly there are such men and women—not hermaphrodites, whose psychology we did not consider, but men and women for whom the sex difference or identity does not play any rôle and who seek only the satisfaction of the crude sex-drive. They use the partner simply as an instrument, as the most available object. It is very likely that children before or at puberty may often have this attitude. In most homosexual unions, however, the fantasy of sex metamorphosis operates. Of course the same situation, with the necessary changes in imagery, is valid for relations amongst women.

We now come to another question, which, like the first, is usually not asked by contemporary psychology: what is the attitude toward the opposite sex of persons who prefer members of their own sex as love-objects? The answer is obvious: they turn away from opposites; they have no interest in the other sex. The more one delves into the research of psychological processes, the stronger does the impression grow that the obvious is an excellent hiding place for things which should be concealed. The obvious can be too conspicuously obvious.

What, I repeat, is the attitude of this large group of men toward the opposite sex? We have, of course, to differentiate between their social behavior towards women and their feelings towards them. The first is often blameless, ranging from courteous indifference to mild flirtatiousness. In a case which I observed, there was even a *fausse maitresse*, a woman who was officially courted and was considered as the sweetheart in society in order to secure an alibi for the homosexual man. What the homosexual's emotional attitude really is can easily be concluded from the nature of the fantasies mentioned before. It is clear that some homosexual men take over the rôle of a woman. They behave like women in their relationships with other men, imitate feminine manners and mannerisms, and show generally a woman's attitude in some of their movements, details of dress, and habits.<sup>1</sup> All observers agree about these characteristic traits, but there is a

<sup>1</sup> I know well that this description fits only the type of the passive homosexual, while the active type who chooses the "girlish" boy as his object is often extremely virile in his behavior. (Compare many of the German officers who are homosexual.) I restrict my comments here only to the other type.



touch in them which, in spite of its conspicuousness, escapes their observation.

The aping of feminine modes and manners by the homosexual seems evidence of admiration of women. Is there not a saying that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery? But the fact that such feminine males choose men, not women, as objects seems contradictory, and close observation reveals other contradictory features, which not only destroy the faith in the genuineness of such a supposed devotion, but even exclude it. Whoever has had the opportunity to observe the behavior of homosexual men among themselves gets the impression that they do not simply imitate femininity, but travesty it. When you listen to their conversations, as one man speaks to another, you hear clearly in their feminine imitation the sounds of unconscious mockery and hateful sneering. Here are a few sentences picked up from conversations between homosexual men: "Darling, you are so cute!" "Dearie, what a time we had!" "Let's take our baskets and go to market." "She took her hair down and said . . ." (told about another man). Homosexual men are called "Belles" or "Bitches." Movements such as removing a resisting lock from the forehead, swaying of the hips, and so on, are not merely imitated; they are ridiculed in the imitation.<sup>2</sup> This attempt to caricature reveals a hostility, and we begin to understand that to take the place of a woman in the plays of love and sex has the unconscious meaning, to remove the object and to take for oneself the significance she once had. There are other traits which are scarcely less conspicuous, although they are likewise neglected by observers—for instance, the apparent lack of envy and jealousy towards women. One would expect that a man who prefers men as objects would not be jealous of women. There is no reason to be astonished that

<sup>2</sup> The imitation of women in fantasies can go to grotesque lengths, like that of a man who calls himself "Auntie Caroline" and imagines himself as a prostitute in long stockings being attacked by a man, or as a coquette girl "who plays them all and belongs to none," and even as an abandoned woman, when his male lover deserts him. A homosexual patient asserts that he cannot feel attracted to women because he is himself one. These pseudo-women unconsciously hate the real ones. One of them said in psychoanalysis: "If there were no women, I would not be a homosexual. For all I care, all women might be drowned except a few who create the need to run away from them to men." What ties homosexual men unconsciously together is their secret hatred of women. It is apparent that similar factors operate in homosexual women.

he is ready to advise his female acquaintances and lady friends how to win men, how to deal with them, how to flirt, even to advise them how to dress. One can understand that such a man has even a kind of "sisterly" interest in the love affairs of women. What is surprising in the psychoanalysis of homosexual men is not that they are not jealous of women, but that they unconsciously try to make them jealous.

I am speaking here of a group of men who are not completely homosexual, who do not restrict their interest solely to the same sex, but who only prefer men to women—a group which has more claim on our psychological attention than the radicals, not only because these semi-homosexuals are much more numerous, but also because we can obtain more interesting information about their psychical processes than from the others.

We observe that the members of the larger group are not insensitive to the charm of women, that they can even feel the beginning of a tender or sexual interest in them, but that then something happens which diverts this incipient attraction to a man. What is this? What causes this diversion of interest? Let me present a few instances: A homosexual patient takes a lady out to dinner and enjoys his conversation with her until a handsome young man of a feminine type appears in the restaurant and sits down with other men at a near-by table. The patient, who had just begun to feel attracted toward his lady companion, suddenly is interested only in the young man. He feels that he might miss something if he does not make the acquaintance of this handsome youth. He seeks a pretext, says farewell to the lady, and joins the company of the men. Here is another almost incredible case: A man who has always been homosexual becomes interested in a girl, and the relationship leads to a real "affair." Some minutes after sexual intercourse, in which he functions normally<sup>3</sup> although without great satisfaction, he goes to the telephone in the bedroom of the girl, phones his favorite boy friend in order to make an appointment, and jokes and flirts with him while the girl is listening. My third example is even more strange: A man who for some years has had sexual relations only with another

<sup>3</sup> That is very possible for many homosexual persons. They feel then not as men, but as they imagine men would feel and act in the situation.



man marries an attractive girl. A few weeks later the young wife has to make a short trip. The man grows restless during her absence and goes to his previous friend with whom he has sexual intercourse with great satisfaction.

What are the common traits of these instances? The deflection of attraction from the female to the male is too conspicuous to be overlooked, but there are others. Is there not observable a kind of latent spitefulness? Was the woman not at first led to believe in each example that she had awakened a tender interest in the man and was she not then suddenly and brusquely made to understand that she had not, but that his real interest belonged to another man? The behavior of the homosexual is full of unconscious purpose, and the task of the psychologist is to get at the hidden motives of such a puzzling attitude.

Perhaps we can guess at them if we compare these attitudes with similar ones. There is, so to speak, the normal, everyday phenomenon of deviation of attraction. You notice it in parties and elsewhere in our society: young married women flirt with men, while married men, young or old, court young girls and ladies. The friendly and even the sexual emotions thus aroused are then transferred to the legitimate husbands and wives respectively. A husband much older than his wife revealed not only his suspicious character, but also unusual psychological insight by a remark he made the other day. He smilingly asked his wife, who, having just returned from an animated party, seemed desirous of having sex-relations with him, "Who attracted you so much tonight?" The young ladies do not seriously consider going to bed with the men they have flirted with—if they did they would not be ladies—and the men have generally no trouble in suppressing or transferring the stimulation caused by their playing with other women. Loyalty, one might say, is a relative idea, but that is a question of evaluation.

What are the differences between these normal deviations and the previously described homosexual diversions of interest? So far as I can see, there are two: first, the abnormal deviation goes in the direction of the same sex, and second, it contains an element of spitefulness intended to prove something to the woman. This latter trait can sometimes be observed in cases like that of

the flirtatious woman who wants to make her husband jealous, but it is rarely observable in normal people without such intentions.

We come nearer to the concealed meaning of the homosexual attitude when we compare it with instances in which the jealousy of the person is aroused to serve other purposes. I shall cite only one case as representative of many: In his sexual life a patient showed a particular behavior which was puzzling enough. He became sexually potent after his young and attractive wife told him of the flirtations she was carrying on with other men. He not only encouraged her to flirt, but also gave her advice on how to attract and excite her admirers, most of whom were his own friends. Of course she had to respect certain frontiers, but within them she should use all feminine tricks to rouse the men. She then had to give her husband a detailed report of the conversations she had with her admirers and of their attempts to seduce her. Through this report her husband became sexually excited. It is clear that here also a secret homosexual factor was effective, but the strongest and the unconscious source of his stimulation was of another kind. His sexual potency was increased by a powerful influx from the source of the ego-drives. It was as if he had said to his friends: "You made such great efforts. You did your best or your worst to bring her across, but all was in vain. I alone can conquer her and possess her." It was thus his superiority-feeling, his triumph over his rivals which contributed decidedly to his sexual excitement. His behavior presents a counterpart of the attitude of the homosexuals.

As a result of comparing and contrasting such behavior with that of the homosexual man—his turning away from women and his demonstrative preference for men, his revealing hostility in his mocking imitation of femininity—we dare to conjecture what the concealed meaning of his attitude is. If we base our assumptions on these features, we would say that the homosexual man once had a great admiration for women, was envious and jealous of them. The original attraction their charms held for him was transformed to revulsion. In other words, he was on the way to love them but he did not achieve this aim, or if he did, hostility was the eventual result. We do not know why. We can only observe that he now oscillates between hostility against them and



an effort to withdraw his interest from them, interrupted by occasional periods of being attracted.

The other trait, the provocative tendency to make the woman jealous of another man combined with jealousy of the woman, promises to be more illuminating. It is so odd and appears so nonsensical that one becomes suspicious that it is purposeful. What appears so absurd often has good unconscious meaning.

Reasoning from the effect to the existence of an unconscious motivation, which is always a valid procedure in psychoanalysis, helps us further. The motive behind this behavior is revealed by the person's efforts to appear as not jealous and at the same time to make others jealous. There is only one explanation: there exists a deep-rooted unconscious resentment against women in homosexual men. We can guess its origin. It lies in a previous love-disappointment, perhaps in childhood, which was accompanied by passionate jealousy. What was felt before in one's own person is now provoked in the other person. The boy was once abandoned for a man, and now he abandons the woman for a man, not only turning the tables on her, not only inflicting the hurt he once experienced, but in bitter, unconscious mockery inflicting it by the same means. It is as if he would say to the woman, his original love-object, his mother or sister: "You preferred a man to me, now I prefer a man to you. I have taken your place, and I shall be loved by such a man." His behavior shows, then, that he takes the man away from her, as a woman would lure a man away from a rival.

His seeming absence of jealousy, together with his frequently unconscious effort to make the woman jealous, proves how deeply he once suffered under torments of jealousy. His reaction is not only a primitive form of retaliation; it also serves as a protection against a repetition of the hurt as if the man would say: "That shall not happen again to me." In turning away from the woman after he has paid some attention to her, he retaliates for his own humiliation, but in turning away to a man he expresses his bitterness and mockery: "I can do as you did to me. I can play a female rôle with all the tricks and mannerisms." Unmistakably this behavior is intended to humiliate and degrade the woman (think of the man who called up his boy-friend after intercourse with

the girl) and to show her his contempt and scorn. Such rivalry with women is expressed by the man's taking their place and adopting their feminine qualities, and by his always caricaturing their deficiencies and weaknesses. The seeming absence of jealousy is a measure of protection used to hide grief and rage. The attempt to make them jealous shows, however, that the memory of the old grief and fury has unconsciously remained and that it is still active.

The shifting of attention and attraction now becomes explicable. Remember the man who turned his interest away from the lady with whom he was dining to the young man whose entrance worked upon him like a warning signal. It was as if he unconsciously thought: "Now she will not be interested in me any more, but in this young man. I do not want to feel so terribly jealous and to suffer as I have before. I want her to be jealous and suffer. I shall turn away from her to this attractive young man." Such an attitude can also occur, of course, if the woman is absent. Her presence can well be supplied by fantasy.

The young married man who, during the short absence of his wife, returned to his male lover must have unconsciously thought: "While she is away, my wife will feel attracted toward another man; therefore I shall have an affair with a man, as perhaps she will." The motive of revenge is unconscious, but it can be sensed. It does not contradict but rather confirms the view that the love-object whom the homosexual man chooses often has the traits of those persons his original object cherished or admired. In one of my cases a homosexual man, who was small and delicate, preferred tall, blond, athletic young men as sexual objects. The decisive factor was not so much that this type was the opposite of his own, but it was the type his mother once admired.<sup>4</sup> Hos-

<sup>4</sup> The formula which might express the psychical development would be the following: "She wants me tall and fair-haired, as tall and blond as Carl is—because I am not like that, she does not love me, but Carl—I shall love him." One of the important factors in the development is the deflated ego combined with unconscious guilt-feeling because of envious and hostile impulses. The feeling of one's own inadequacy can, for the most part, be traced back to childhood. Before he can be a man among men, a boy has to be appreciated as a boy among boys. Most homosexual men report that they were as boys ridiculed and called "sissy." They felt they were outsiders and outcasts. As long as this feeling of inadequacy and guilt is not weakened, the homosexual inclination will remain. Homosexuals often report that they, in their childhood, were very shy with



tility, jealousy, revenge against women, together with a great sense of one's own inadequacy as a man, are some of the determining factors in homosexuality.

The restricted space allowed for the discussion of homosexuality in this book makes it impossible to deal with the rôle which avoidance of rivalry with the same sex plays in the genesis and development of the inclination toward the same sex. Homosexual tendencies develop only after the boy steps aside for another boy, avoids competition and gives the other the middle of the road. It can be considered as a hopeful symptom if rivalry toward men reappears amongst the emotions of a homosexual. In one of my cases a man himself recognized this characteristic when he for the first time competed with another man about a taxicab which both approached simultaneously.

I am quite aware that I have neglected many forms of homosexuality in this discussion. The limited place the subject can claim in this book forced restriction to a single phase of the problem, the one which interests us here in connection with the main theme. It is at the same time the phase which psychoanalysis has not discovered until now. It is a long time since research has brought us new psychological insight into this still unsolved problem. In science, no news means bad news.

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girls, as if girls were "untouchables" and boys had to be ashamed before them while boys could have all kinds of sexual activities with boys. There is no doubt that homosexuality means also acceptance of failure and defeat and an effort to make the best of them.

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## *There Is No Such Thing as Sublimated Sex*

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ACCORDING to Freud, love is a kind of arrested development of the sex-urge. It is difficult to imagine how the crude sexual drive could be deflected from its original aims to tenderness, and how the urge became desexualized, but remained in its essence sexual. Let us take a concrete instance: our young couple, John and Jane. How did John's love for the girl develop in a way corresponding to the psychoanalytical theory? Jane was originally only the object of John's sexual wishes. His sensual desire was inhibited in reaching its aim. The conscious wish became then directed to tenderness only, while the original sexual aims remained unconscious. Such an interpretation is hard to believe.

Even more difficult to accept is another transformation which Freud and the psychoanalysts called the most important one to which the sex-drive is subject—its sublimation. In love the object remained at least the same; only the aim was a different one. Consciously at least the man did not desire sexual satisfaction primarily, but tenderness and companionship. In the process of sublimation, we are told, the energy of the sexual drives is deflected from its original goal and is used for other purposes, to achieve ends which are not sexual but of a higher social or ethical value. Psychoanalysis asserts that our cultural achievements are due, to a great extent, to the redirected energy of these sexual impulses.

We think again of the young couple. If John meets external or internal hindrances which prevent him from going to bed with Jane, then another way opens up to dispose of the sexual desire which the charming girl arouses in the young man. He can use



this sexual energy to write a novel or to make a career in his bank. By psychoanalysts such a metamorphosis of the original sex-drive is called sublimation.

The term quickly became a slogan. Almost at once New York intellectuals used it in their discussions and wisecracks. ("It is better to mate than to sublimate.") There is, however, a serious side to the question, namely, whether or not such a transformation exists at all. Can John, who wants to go to bed with Jane, really change the sexual energy which dictates this wish into a grim determination to write the great American novel? Is the zeal which he feels while he conceives of plot and characters and while he types his manuscript really of sexual origin and nature? Can the sexual drives be so deflected from their original aim that their energy can be used for these other nobler or higher purposes?

If John does not desire Jane any more (nor any other girl) and is only preoccupied with thoughts and fantasies about his novel, where is the justification for assuming that his new ambition stems originally from sex-drives? We do not deny that John turns away from Jane and uses his whole energy to become a great writer or a bank president, but we do not believe that this energy is desexualized sex. Is it not much more likely that John's energy is moved from the realm of sexual drives to the region of other, different impulses? Let us choose another comparison: John is very hungry and has little money. He wants to go to a restaurant, but he renounces his dinner and visits an art exhibition instead. Can it be said that his wish to see the pictures of Rembrandt amounts to a sublimation of his original hunger, of this unpleasant empty sensation in his stomach? Is it in origin and character the same appetite which is satisfied in the cafeteria and in the art gallery?

I have previously explained that the word sex means to me the expression of a merely biological drive which in its original form is as primitive and elementary as hunger or the needs of excretion. The sex-drive gains its great psychological significance only in its alliance with nonsexual drives. Unless it is so allied, it is not a factor in the formation of culture. Even the institutions which are usually associated with sexual life, like marriage, can-

not be traced to crude sexual needs only. By no procedure in the world can sexual excitement be converted into creative, cultural energy and be diverted to higher pursuits. Hamlet might wish that this too, too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew, but this too solid flesh cannot be sublimated. Likewise, the sexual desires of this flesh cannot be turned into wisdom and statesmanship. The sex-drive has as much chance of being sublimated and purified in the form of creative and intellectual energy as we all have of being transformed after our death into bodiless and sexless angels singing hymns in heaven.

To assume that the crude sex-drive can be used as a stepping stone to high cultural aims has as much sense as the assertion that the need to discharge urine can be deflected and the resultant pressure utilized as energy for achieving noble ends. At first the idea of sublimation of the sex-drive sounds plausible and ingenious. You think of poems of love, you think of Beethoven's sonatas, you think of the many and great human achievements which are due to the psychical energy of unfulfilled love, of desire and longings. No doubt many mills are moved by this wind. Nevertheless, such great yearning is not any more the unalloyed sexual drive. It is love, which is different in its origin and nature. The psychoanalysts see only the force of sex, and they refuse to make a song and a dance of the other power, by which most songs and dances are made.

The crude sex-urge is easily satisfied and is entirely incapable of being sublimated. If it is strongly excited, it needs, in its urgency, an immediate release. It cannot be deflected from its one aim to different aims, or at most can be as little diverted as the need to urinate or as hunger and thirst. It insists on gratification in its original realm. The satisfaction of this particular urge cannot be fulfilled by the substitution of another goal. I should like to drive this point home because it is time to make an end to the general confusion now current. I am speaking of the crude sex-drive, not of those forms in which it is fused with other drives. I am referring to sex in its simple and elementary nature, and that is exactly what Freud meant originally when he used the term sex.

If an investigator should try to convince us that the ur



thirst or excretion can be deflected to the accomplishment of cultural achievements, we would refuse to believe him. That great discoveries in science, that poems and symphonies owe their existence to the failure to satisfy these vital needs is very doubtful. I am not well acquainted with the newest literature and music, but until some years ago at least it was obvious that no important poem or musical composition was due to repressed thirst or to denial of relief to the bladder. Why, then, should we believe that cultural achievements are the result of deflection of a physical sex-need? But if such is not the case, why call it sex and label it wrongly?

All evidence discredits the theory that the crude sex-drive can be sublimated, and every consideration favors the view that the energy of ego-drives, by stimulating the ambitions and aspirations of men, can be used for cultural achievements. Love itself belongs, as I shall try to demonstrate, to these drives, but in addition the needs of social recognition, competitiveness, vanity and vainglory are all offsprings of these powerful drives. It is to them—in some cases to them in their fusion with the sex-drive—that we owe most of the achievements of civilization, from the efforts to gratify the primitive needs of men to the fulfillment of their proudest accomplishments. I hope that with this differentiation the curtain goes slowly down on the theory that the crude sex-drive contributes most of the creative energy to human progress.

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## *An Objection Is Raised*

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IN MY LAST chapter I have rung down the curtain on the theory that the sex-drive can be sublimated. There was a moment of hesitation or suspense before the close as if something had to be dealt with before the subject could be dismissed finally.

A young student of psychology who is familiar with my views raised an objection which is serious enough to be considered. He wrote me a letter from which I quote some paragraphs:

Suppose a man has a more or less pent-up sex-drive and he meets a girl. He thinks she is wonderful and that he is in love with her. They have intercourse and after it is all over, and even the next day, he discovers she is really miles away from his ideal or that there are dozens of things that stand in the way of his really loving her. If he repeatedly observes this tendency he may come to the conclusion that the Freudians and others are right, that his frustrated libido is in part sublimating itself into affection, tenderness and is simulating love as long as the pressure (from libido) is present. My question, of course, is: Where has he made his mistake? On first sight, in this one case, it would appear that the idea of sublimation is well demonstrated. For me life is harder, though, because I have read your book<sup>1</sup> . . . With what you have said in mind, I would try to answer thus: the pressure (or push) from the pent-up sex-drive tends to distort or blind the real ego-ideal, especially the unconscious part of it which is most of it. After this sex-hunger is satisfied, the mental characteristics can be brought into sharper focus

<sup>1</sup> *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1944. A tiring passage is here omitted.



which usually shows them up to be distant from the ideal. Both the tone and the content of what I just said fail to satisfy my need for a perfect answer.

Such arguments brought forward in the spirit of the search for truth, and in contrast with some other letters which are silly or flippant, deserve attention and should be answered honestly to the best of one's knowledge. The weight or merit of the argument can be supported by the fact that two great psychologists anticipated it—Arthur Schopenhauer and Sigmund Freud. In a passage of his writings Freud mentions that sex (in its enlarged sense) exhausts itself periodically in the sexual act and that the desire has to wait until it is again aroused. The emotions which Freud subsumes in the term sex, also the sublimated form of tenderness, find their release in the sexual act which is comparable to an explosion. Corresponding to this view the phenomenon which our student observes is then a common one and is explained by the very nature of the sex-drive.

For Schopenhauer also love is a "differentiated, specialized, in a strict sense individualized sex-drive."<sup>2</sup> The overappreciation of the object and the intensity of the passion, he feels, are determined by the fact that the quality of the next generation is dependent on the choice of the mate. The will of the species lives in the urge with which the lover desires his object. The sex-drive takes on the mask of objective admiration because nature needs this strategy for its purpose.

The increasing devotion of two lovers immediately before and during intercourse is really already the will of a new individual to become alive. Nature has fooled the lover into imagining that he desires a deep personal satisfaction, whereas he really perpetuates his kind. Nature has implanted a kind of illusion, a chimera, which camouflages a selfish motive for the purpose of preserving the species:

According to the character here demonstrated every lover will, after having finally reached satisfaction, experience a strange disappointment and will wonder that what he desired with so much longing does not give him more than any other  
Metaphysics of Sexual Love," in *The World as Will and Idea*, Part II.

sexual gratification. . . . Every man in love finds himself fooled after having done the great deed; for the delusion by which the individual became the dupe of nature has disappeared.

Schopenhauer also states that the man's love decreases considerably from the moment he achieves his satisfaction: "Almost any other woman attracts him more than the one he had already possessed." Love is thus interpreted as a mask of nature's purpose, and "the proof of it is that this great passion also is extinguished in gratification to the astonishment of the lover." After the will of the species has been fulfilled, the illusion that what has value only for the species also means highest happiness for the individual must evaporate. The spirit of the species, having taken possession of the individual, releases him again. Deserted by it, he falls back into his original restriction and poverty and realizes with astonishment that after such high, heroic and infinite striving he did not get more enjoyment than what every sexual satisfaction secures. Contrary to his expectations, he does not feel happier than before. He realizes that he had been the fool of the will of the species.

Schopenhauer's and Freud's views have much in common. They both see in love a derivative of sex which is dissipated by intercourse, and they connect the sudden decrease of passion after it with the satisfaction of the urge. Our student, who did not read Schopenhauer, has similar views and also supposes that the individual is fooled or blinds himself, only to realize he has been the victim of an illusion. He does not go, however, to the metaphysical length of Schopenhauer, who accuses nature of trickery, but restricts himself to the conjecture that the pressure of the sex-urge is responsible for the delusion.

There can be no doubt about the correctness of the description which Schopenhauer, Freud, and the student present. William Hogarth has shaped the two emotional situations in his pictures "Before" and "After," and Arthur Schnitzler gave them an unforgettable expression in the melancholic and amusing dialogue *Hands Around*. The observation of the crescendo and decresce



of the emotional tension is precise. The question is whether the interpretation is correct. I do not see any necessity for assuming that nature cheats us. In attributing such tendencies to nature, we see her, perhaps, too anthropomorphically, and we forget that we are only a small part of nature's creation.

In my own attempt at a psychological explanation I select as my point of departure the consideration that the emotional situation, although in general correctly stated, shows marked individual differences. The decrease of the man's interest in the mate is by no means always as sharp and abrupt as the student describes. He himself would readily admit that there are differences in the reaction with different sexual partners and even with the same partner. We realize that an unknown factor, which neither Freud nor Schopenhauer nor our correspondent has considered, plays a certain rôle and determines, if not the general character, at least the intensity of the reaction. There is further the incontestable and conspicuous fact that satisfactory sexual intercourse has no such sobering effect upon women. For them intercourse does not block the way to tenderness, but rather opens it. They react as if the physical intimacy removed hindrances which formerly had prevented the expression and free flow of affection. Is not this also an indication that an unknown factor influences the reaction?

Here is my attempt to solve the problem: As I have said before, the attraction which a member of one sex exercises upon a member of the other is usually the result of a blending of the sex-urge, the will to conquer, and affection. Of these three factors the sex-drive is the most indiscriminate, and affection the most personal pull, while the lust to conquer has a middle position between the two. The sexual urge and the desire to conquer are primitive and elementary. Love is a result of a cultural development, in reality, through the influence of civilization, a transformation of the instinctive urge to conquer. The power of the passion which pulls a person to the desired one is a summation of these three emotional forces, which are united for the purpose of possessing the object. We do not for a moment neglect the fact that possession does not mean the same for the lover as for a sexually excited individual. For the one it means emotional

union; for the other, physical penetration. The two aims do not coincide, but neither do they exclude each other. Sexual intercourse can become the physical expression of emotional companionship and affection.

Let us now consider from this point of view the reaction which occupies our attention. The two most powerful components of the mixture, the sexual desire and the will to conquer, find their fulfillment in the sexual act. The third factor, individual affection, which need not be present at all, and which, if it is present, may vary greatly in intensity, lacks the compelling force of the other two. As a product of civilization it is no match for these powerful elementary drives with which it is occasionally matched. The emotional effect of sexual intercourse will thus be determined by the sudden relaxation which the two more important factors of sex and lust of conquest find in gratification. The diminution of tension which follows is the result of satisfaction of these two imperative urges.

It is clear that the amount of psychical energy is greatly diminished when the considerably stronger and most urgent part of its claims is fulfilled.

The difference before and after corresponds thus to the diminution of an electric current. The effect is the same as if a Jupiter-lamp, which spotlights a person brightly, were to be replaced by a 45-watt bulb. The features of the person would then become dim.

This explanation can settle only the question of the diminished interest in a general or mechanical way. Before we proceed we shall try to decide which of the two drives has the lion's share in the satisfaction. The answer seems easy, considering the nature of the act. It must be the sex urge. It is, however, probable that individual differences may decide the predominance. With one person the sex-drive will get greater satisfaction; with another, the need to conquer. Because their union makes the two drives almost inseparable in the situation, the decision is difficult. Good self-observation has convinced many men that the triumph of conquest is for them more important than the sexual enjoyment itself or that this satisfaction plays a considerable part in sexual satisfaction. Returning to the psychological observation



the student, we would be inclined to think that the decrease of interest in the partner is to a great extent due to the gratification of the conquering lust. In analyzing the experiences of many men I have discovered that their passion for a woman began to decrease even before the sex act; at the moment, to be precise, when she seemed ready to surrender.

At all events, the satisfaction of having conquered the woman coincides for a great number of men or for a certain type of man with the diminution of the passionate interest previously felt. Satisfaction of the lust of conquest seemingly deprives the desired object of much of her charm and glamour. Possession often removes an urge which, before the act, made all other wishes appear to be pale and insignificant.

Only a few provisional remarks need be added about the two facts previously mentioned. The decrease of interest in the partner after sexual intercourse is, we have said, not always as sharp and sudden as in the cases described. There is enough evidence for the assertion that the woman remains admired and desired when she has inspired real affection, not a passing attraction. The satisfying of the sex-urge and of the desire to conquer need not diminish the tenderness for the object. What Schopenhauer, Freud, and the student describe is not generally valid, but only a frequent experience of men.

I mentioned that after intercourse women do not feel the same disenchantment felt by many men. Their affection seems rather to gain in intensity, as if they were grateful to the man. Several reasons might be responsible for the difference in the reaction. The sexual act does not have for women the character of a task or a test which they perform. The conquering will in its aggressive form is certainly less developed in them than in men. Finally a certain degree of affection or tenderness seems to be a prerequisite of sexual satisfaction for women. It is much rarer for them to desire sexual intercourse solely for the satisfaction of the crude sex-urge. Rarely do they exhibit possessiveness without a trace of tenderness. I do not deny that this possibility can also become a reality with women, but apparently no deep satisfaction can result for them under such conditions.

I am well aware of the imperfections of this psychological

explanation, but it is the best I can offer at this time. One question is settled by it: there is no sublimation of the sex-drive. This play was a failure and the curtain will not rise again on its performance.



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## *There Is No Sexual Origin of Neurosis*

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SOME REMARKS on the psychology of neurosis are necessary here because psychoanalysis asserts that neurotic troubles are always disturbances in sex life. This view of Freud, thoroughly mistaken and often misinterpreted and misunderstood, had a disastrous effect because the word sex was taken in its most elementary meaning. After more than thirty-four years of analytical practice and study, I freely confess that Freud's view of the sexual etiology of neurosis appears to me a magnificent mistake, and I believe that the libido theory is built upon an unsound foundation. Unsatisfied sexual desire can certainly cause difficulties, even disturbances of a psychical kind, but in the same manner as unappeased hunger and not greater. I should, indeed, say the disturbances are rather less because, while there are many situations in which hunger cannot be satisfied, the rude and brutal sex instinct can always be satiated—if necessary by primitive self-satisfaction, by masturbation. No such possibilities exist for other drives like hunger or thirst.

But do not sexual disturbances play a great rôle in the symptoms of the neurosis? Is Freud entirely mistaken? Yes, Freud is wrong on this particular point in his concept of sex, although sexual difficulties appear conspicuously in the symptomatology of neurosis. That is not a contradiction. The fact that unsatisfied sexual desire appears so often, almost regularly, as one of the main difficulties of neurotic persons, does not prove that the neurosis is caused by lack of sexual gratification. It would be just as incorrect for a physician to diagnose the symptoms of a patient who has conspicuous difficulty in breathing as evidence of a

disease of the lungs; for, as is well known, respiration is often impeded by functional shortcomings of the heart.

To neo-psychoanalysis the sexual troubles and difficulties of neurotics appear only as the most conspicuous symptom of a deeper-rooted cause. The sex function is from this point of view only the chief executive of a central power. When the executive fails, there must be something wrong with the government he represents. Freud's basic statement that neurosis has a sexual etiology is erroneous. Without a weakness in the ego no neurosis is possible. Here is a disturbance of the whole personality, not merely of its sexual sphere.

This is not the place to present a theory on the origin and nature of neurosis. I shall restrict myself to the provisional remark that a neurosis is an emotional disturbance caused by a shake-up of the self-trust and self-confidence of a person. It results in anxieties, inhibitions and symptoms which all reflect failure in achieving two aims—to love and to work.

If we consider the first of these accomplishments which civilization demands from the individual, we must ask if it is not correct that sexual difficulties play a great rôle in the history and in the symptoms of most neurotics. They do, but these difficulties are not the cause, but actually the effect of disturbances of the ego. It is necessary to upset the applecart which the psychoanalysts have here put before the horse. It makes a great difference whether the problem is approached in terms of the cause or the effect. The character of psychoanalysis justifies a comparison taken from chemistry: the result is not the same when water is poured into sulphuric acid as when sulphuric acid is poured into water.

The assertion of psychoanalysts that every neurosis has a sexual etiology is founded upon an optical illusion. This is not a matter of opinion, but a matter of fact. It can certainly be proved—it is proved in this book—that Freud does not differentiate, when he speaks of sex, between three components: the sex-drive, the urge to conquer, and the desire for affection. The inhibitions, anxieties, and symptoms of a neurosis are not caused by any difficulty in satisfying the sex-needs pure and simple, but by the failure to satisfy concurrently the power-drive and the demand for love and by the failure in making the sex-object a love-object



or the loved person a sexual object. A neurosis does not exist on the lower levels of civilization. It is the child of a civilization which is culturally progressed, but not progressed enough. A neurosis due only to an unfulfilled sex-urge is not imaginable. It always results from the failure of the individual effort to bring sex, love, and the lust for power into harmony.

The ego, challenged by the instinctive urges on the one hand and by the cultural demands on the other, escapes, greatly weakened, into the refuge of neurosis. Behind the sexual difficulties, which could be easily removed if they were caused by the sex drive alone, lurk more serious problems—the satisfaction of both sexual desire and the urgent hunger for affection, as well as the need of being loved and recognized. But, on a certain cultural level, sex is unsatisfactory if it does not also satisfy the ego-demands, especially those of love. Most pupils of Freud think that it is the fear of sex, feelings of guilt arising from sex, and fear of castration which are the handicaps preventing a satisfactory sex life. They are sadly mistaken. On the cultural level of those who alone are subject to neurosis there can be no satisfactory sex life which does not satisfy the claims of affection too, and which is not at the same time a satisfactory love life.

Here is a case, one of many thousands, which will show what the consequences are when analysis of neurosis is founded on the mistaken sexual etiology: A young woman, divorced from her husband, suffered from symptoms of great anxiety. Her analyst tried to rid her of her feeling of guilt in connection with sex, hoping that she might lose her anxiety by having sexual relations with other men. The attempt failed, was repeated, and failed again. Going to bed with different men did not remove her anxiety. Why should it? Only love could have worked this miracle, but the analyst dealt only with the "facts of life" as he saw them; and these facts, in his opinion, coincided with the facts of sex life. Her anxieties continued, even increased, as is to be expected from such promiscuity on the part of any well-educated woman with different men for whom she does not care. In her psychoanalysis the word or idea of tenderness was never mentioned. The only theme was sex and the feelings of guilt connected with sexual activities. Freud, whose views on sex I consider wrong, certainly

would never have gone so far as to think that sex, in this narrow sense of the word, could be the remedy for a neurosis. A whole generation of cultured people were misled into tracing the source of all psychical troubles to sex life, as if the relationships between human beings were restricted to the simple factor of sexual gratification. Sex presents itself only as the outer aspect of deeper-rooted problems in the individual, of difficulties in conquering possessiveness, envy, and hostility.

Neurosis does not signify a failure in sex life, but in love life. Although psychoanalysis has the unclaimed merit of removing many sexual inhibitions and suppressions, it has failed to deal with the problem of affection. Even after analysis many men and women are unable to love, to give and receive tenderness. Many patients who came to psychoanalysts with emotional troubles, which were often connected with their sex life, were freed from inhibitions and achieved normal attitudes toward sex. Many of them reached a purely mechanical sex-release in promiscuous relationships. Before undertaking psychoanalysis they were, perhaps, afraid of going to the dogs. After their sexual inhibitions had been removed, quite a few of them might well have been afraid that they had indeed arrived there.

In one of Freud's papers there is a remarkable passage which says that a certain group of neurotic patients do not go through with their analytical treatment. They prefer, says Freud, "a recovery by love." That means they fall in love with someone and do not need analytical treatment any more. But was it not stated that a neurosis is due only to a failing in the sex life of a person? If this statement were true, the recovery process could be completed only when the patient was able to function well sexually. But falling in love as a remedy, as a substitute for psychoanalytical treatment? Is that cure reconcilable with the statement, made again and again, that sex and only sex is the problem of neurosis? In discussing the sexual origin of neurosis, the great magician Freud let the problem of love disappear. While demonstrating that the tophat is only a phallic symbol, he suddenly pulls the idea of love out of it.

The psychoanalysts speak of psycho-sexuality (which is as sensible as speaking of psycho-excretion), of love as aim-inhibited



sex (which is nonsense, pure and simple), of sublimation (of which the sex drive is incapable), and so on. They pretend that when they speak of sex they do not mean the crude sex-urge only. But why not be candid? They do mean the sex-drive, and they mean nothing more. We as spectators act like the forthright youngster in the fairy tale who insisted that the king was really naked.

Not for Freud, but for many of his pupils the gulf which splits the world is formed like a female genital, and the signposts on the road to recovery have a phallic shape. Like overgrown schoolboys, they notice only the crude sex-urge in the relationship between the sexes. They must know that there are other problems; otherwise they could not turn so consistently away from them. Like children who draw a person's profile, they place both eyes on one side of the face.

Only a few remarks concerning the therapy of neuroses are necessary here. There is an old Latin proverb which affirms that like things are cured by likes, "*similia similibus curantur.*" An illness will be cured by those means which are most appropriate to the character of the complaint. The psychoanalyst apparently expects recovery in his patient as a result of dissipating the repressions which prevent the free flow of sexual desires. If, he argues, the neurosis is caused by lack of sexual satisfaction, the aim must be to remove all hindrances and inhibitions bearing on it, and to secure the possibility of full sexual gratification. This—in the opinion of many analysts—is really the only program.

But how is this aim to be reached? The proper method, they say, is reliving the history of the patient; filling in the gaps in his memories which are subjected to suppressions and repressions; giving freedom of speech and thought to all aggressive, mean, jealous impulses and tendencies; diminishing the demands of a too severe super-ego (what we called an ego-ideal); and strengthening his weakened, discouraged ego. But does not this procedure amount to removing the barriers which prevent him from loving? Does not this reconciliation with powerful possessive and aggressive impulses mean that his tolerance toward them and the diminishing of his feeling of guilt would make him more capable of feeling affection and tenderness? Again, what would the strengthening of the ego contribute to sexual satisfaction if it were to

mean nothing but appeasement of the pure sex-drive? It would not help at all. Did we not say that the emotional development of love is hindered and impeded by too weak a self-confidence, by self-dislike, by feelings of guilt and worthlessness?<sup>1</sup> The conclusion is quite clear: the sexual difficulties are only obvious expressions of another, of a concealed evil. That men and women are impotent and frigid, that they turn to perversions, that they cannot function sexually are only manifestations of their failure in the attempt to unite sex, the lust of power, and affection. That they emphasize their sex needs means only that they are not aware of these other shortcomings, that their emotional conflict, the struggle of affection, has remained unconscious.

Does the investigation and discussion of the individual sex problem not prove of value in psychoanalytical therapeutics, since it touches the deeper and more important problem and stirs up the unconscious tendencies? The contest between aggressiveness, greed, hostility and the need for love reflects itself best in the relationship between the sexes, for the failure to merge them is nowhere more visible than in these sexual disturbances. But that is as little identical with the real cause of the neurosis as the shadow with the substance.

Analytical therapy does not operate successfully by solving the sexual problems of the patient, but by strengthening his self-confidence in such a manner that his ability to love and to achieve his ambitions is gained or regained. I shall try to elucidate by a simile the indirect way in which psychoanalysis has obtained its therapeutic results (methods which are improved by the better insights of neo-analysis). In the terrible war through which we are living, a number of airplanes are ordered to bomb the ammunition depot or the powder factory in X. Bad weather does not permit good observation. They do not hit the factory. Nevertheless, a few minutes later the factory blows up. How is that possible? The incendiary bombs, although they missed the factory, hit other buildings in the neighborhood. Sparks set some parts of the plant afire, with the result that it finally exploded. The effect of psychoanalytical technique on the solution of the sexual problems is similarly indirect. The blow does not hit the target, the

<sup>1</sup> In my book, *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, 1944.



unconscious core of the neurosis, but somewhere in the neighborhood. It does not go home, but nearby. Unavoidably, however, it affects the whole emotional system. It wanders from the palpable periphery to the center of the psychical underground. Love, not sex, is the problem in neurosis.

We measure the psychical health of a person by the following criteria: How far is he capable of loving and working, of being tender and of accomplishing what he desires to do? Both tasks, social in their nature, have achievement as their common denominator, since love is also a personal achievement. The aim is self-fulfillment which goes beyond the realm of selfishness. If that is not worth striving for, nothing is.

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## *Facts of Life and Fairy Tales*

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TO TELL children the facts of life is now recognized as an educational necessity. The advantages of this new solution of many emotional difficulties of children are so obvious that they need not be praised. The merits are made patent by a comparison of the new method with the old hypocrisies, the lies, and the mystery of past generations. There are, however, some imperfections in the new system.<sup>1</sup> I shall mention only two: the time when the information is given and its incompleteness. It is always given too late. When most children are told the facts of life, they have in most cases already constructed some theories of their own, grotesque mixtures of true and false elements. The enlightenment, it seems, is never the first knowledge children receive. In the Vienna of the twenties lived a rather uncultured lady who became one of the *nouveaux riches*, and whose delightful sayings circulated in a city whose people liked to laugh. She had attended in her box the first performance of a tragedy by Arthur Schnitzler. Asked in the intermission how she liked the play, she said, "The play is very nice, but it does not fit for a première." In the same sense, for a mother to tell her children the facts of life is good and praiseworthy, but her presentation does not fit for a first performance. I do not know how the situation can be improved.

The second imperfection is, it seems to me, even more serious. The mother or the teacher does not tell the children all the facts of life. They are not told what it is that makes man and wife join their bodies and their souls. They are given anatomical or bio-

<sup>1</sup> I am not enthusiastic about the birds and bees story and I do not doubt that the sight of cold, detached or embarrassed parents talking about the facts of life embarrasses the children.



logical data, but the facts of life are not merely physical but also psychological. The child is not told what sex means and what love is. I clearly understand the little boy who, after having been told the facts of life by another boy, remarked, "Maybe your parents do such dirty things, but mine certainly don't." Is information about the biological facts of sex alone really a sufficient preparation for boys and girls? Should adolescents not also be enlightened about the psychological differences of the sexes? Should they remain ignorant of the emotional powers of the other drives which will shape their lives? There is no place for such teaching in our school. The biology lesson does not include it, and the psychological lesson excludes it.

But let the pedagogues take care of these problems (I am not competent to discuss them), and let us turn to the problems adults face. Physicians and psychologists teach us the facts of life; we are informed about them by means of books, lectures, and discussions. Science becomes for us the teacher whom we had as children, and we listen attentively, filled with awe at what this teacher has to tell us. In the psychology department we hear much about libido, the Oedipus complex, the components of sexuality. Here are more things told than are true and more things true than are told. I assert that many of the theories thus taught us are not facts, but fables. Here appear fairy tales which no Shakespearean fantasy could imagine, and dangerous tales they are, because they are literally believed in and taken for scientific truth. Love as aim-inhibited sex, the cannibalistic character of infantile sexuality, the sexual lust of the infant in sucking, the identity of the origin of tenderness and lust—all of them are nothing but fairy tales. Other theories are mixtures of fairy tales and science, and still others are gross exaggerations of true facts. Take, for example, the real process of sublimation, which enables us to divert ego-drives, directed to the satisfaction of our most vital needs, to the service of other higher purposes as well. Psychoanalysis in teaching that sex can be sublimated is concocting a pure fairy tale. A real Oedipus situation exists in the life of the child, but psychoanalysis traces the whole development of civilization back to this source. This interpretation is just such an enormous exaggeration as Swift reports about the adventures of

Gulliver with the giants. True, the adults appear to children as giants, but there were never such monsters as Gulliver described. (Do you remember that a contemporary Irish bishop condemned Swift's book because it was full of improbable lies and for his part he "hardly believes a word of it"?) In the books and papers of the psychoanalysts there are hundreds of stories but not many are told in such suggestive prose as those of Freud, who was a born storyteller as well as a genius in science. Only he, in his persuasive manner, could convince most of us that sex, the pure sex-drive, is the greatest single power affecting the human soul. None but he could make us forget or overlook the fact that love and sex are entirely different; none but he could blind us to the predominant rôle the ego-drives and their descendants play in the human soul. There is no true genius without a gross mistake. Freud's mistake is called libido theory. As a result of this magnificent mistake he found a new psychological continent, just as Columbus, seeking the Indies, discovered America. We were all in the same situation as the contemporaries of Columbus, who told Spain about the wonders of the New World he had discovered, a world which, to the day of his death, he believed to be India. He had made known a new world, but he did not realize its identity. The noisy assertions of the psychoanalysts about sex are quite comparable to the tales about a new sea-way to the Indies told by the returning crew of Columbus.

We have no objection to fairy tales if they are presented for what they are. There is much psychological truth in many of them, in most of them, but it is not the same kind of truth the psychoanalysts assume they have discovered. The account of the kiss which awakens the Sleeping Beauty presents beautifully the way in which love dawns upon a girl after the right man has kissed her for the first time. We need not consider the lips as a displaced genital in order to believe in the miracle of dawning virginal affection. The thorn-hedge which surrounds her might symbolize her maidenly restraint and resistance, and we need not think of the hymen. The sexual symbolism is certainly verifiable. The question is only whether it is relevant and consequential in this case and in similar ones.

The fairy tale of Cinderella also doubtless contains a sexual



symbolism in the fitting of the shoe, but the only important thing in the story, as I understand it, is that the narrative pictures a human destiny of typical validity. For the psychologist the events in such a fairy tale are mirrors in which the emotional processes of the figures are reflected. Is not Cinderella the best type of the girl who gains victory through defeat, who lets her sisters override her in anticipation of the final triumph over them, who accepts all humiliations because she knows a day will come when she will humiliate her oppressors? It seems to me that the psychological interest in this point is much more valid than concentration on the sexual symbolism of fitting on the shoe, a symbolism the validity of which we do not deny. There can be no doubt that sexual symbolism governs an extensive realm of the unconscious thoughts but the *furor symbolicus* of many psychoanalysts is as regrettable as any other fanatical mistake. The concept that an aeroplane is in the first place a penis symbol and that beyond that it can be used as a flying machine is distorted. The reader of many analytical books and papers gets the impression that their authors learned to apply the symbolical interpretation not wisely but too well.

Undoubtedly there is much unconscious sexual material in fairy tales, but there is not much crude sexuality in them. In fact, they usually blend sex with love, as is to be expected in fairy tales—and not only in fairy tales. I know at least one, however, in which sex is separated from affection, and very clearly so. It is an exception and, what is more, it is a fairy tale for adults. I shall relate it because it concerns the main theme of this book—teaching grown-up children some facts of life which they are inclined to overlook. This tale, written by Peter Altenberg, a Bohemian writer, who lived in Vienna at the beginning of this century, I shall condense, emphasizing its essential content:

Once upon a time there were a queen and a king who were happily married, but who had to wait a long time before they had a child. When a son was born to them, the happy parents gave a great festival to which all the fairies of the country were invited. By an unfortunate omission, the youngest fairy did not get an invitation. (Or did she get it too late?) Every one of the fairies

appeared in the royal palace and bent over the cradle of the infant to present him with a gift, which was a wish for his future. One wished that he might become strong, another that he might be clever, the third that he might be handsome, and so on. Finally, the youngest fairy also appeared, unbidden. Bending over the cradle she said, "I wish for you that you will be able to embrace a woman only when you love her." She immediately disappeared. The prince grew up to be a strong, clever, handsome young man as the fairies had wished. One day he came to the youngest fairy with a strange request. He said, "Oh, dear fairy, take away for one day, for a single time, the fateful gift you gave me at my birth. Daily I see a shepherdess from the window of my palace. She is in rags, and is not even pretty. She is also, I think, voracious and stupid, but I am crazy about her, and I want her. Only this one time—" The fairy, who as a great idealist was certain that the experience would sober and deeply disappoint the young prince, acceded to his request. On the next morning a thunderclap was heard in the prince's palace, the ceiling of his chamber opened up, and the fairy appeared. She stepped to the bed of the prince and asked, "Now, my prince?" The young man opened his eyes drowsily and said with a friendly smile, "Not bad. Not bad at all."

This is a modern fairy tale, and if it has served the purpose of reminding the reader how separate sex and love are in their characters, I shall be contented. It is straight medicine, without sugar-coating, but it is perhaps useful to remind us that there is much sexual enjoyment in the world without a trace of love.

The fairy tales have other and more important hidden treasures than the sex-secret. What most of them conceal and reveal at the same time is not so much one of the facts of life, but one of its truths.



SECOND PART

LOVE AND THE EGO-DRIVES

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## *A New Concept of Love*

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AS IN THE other sciences discoveries are also made in psychology, lucky findings as well as results of hard, patient and long work; psychologists make courageous expeditions into undiscovered countries, invasions into the last dark continent on earth, the human soul. Such findings are, however, different from the new disclosures in other fields of science, in chemistry, physics, and geology. Whatever great psychologists like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Freud discovered in the depths of psychical life had been found before, but not as psychology. It had lived anonymously among us, unrecognized or misunderstood. It was not absent. It was only hidden. It lived its secretive life in the proverbs of many people, in the creative works of the poets, in the writings of great philosophers and religious leaders, in the sayings of many people who were psychologists without knowing it. They all frequently expressed insight into phenomena of which they were not consciously aware. They made startling statements without recognizing their psychological value and impact, just as uncivilized savages might carelessly strew diamonds and gold around without being aware of their worth.

In this sense, a careful examination of any psychological discovery shows it is really a rediscovery. An insight which had appeared to someone before in a flash is found again, discovered independently by a psychologist, put into the language of his science, and examined with its methods and in the spirit of research.

The little discovery I made seventeen years ago concerning the psychological nature and origin of love was of such a character. This knowledge had been known before and had been lost;



it had to be rediscovered. There is perhaps as much merit in such a rediscovery as there would be in finding a silver dollar on a road where thousands have walked before without seeing it. Perhaps a ray of sunshine hit the coin just at the moment you passed by, and the picture reflected itself in your retina.

I tried to represent this discovery fully in a book published not long ago.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, where we deal only with love between the sexes, with what is called romance, a short outline of the theory will be sufficient. Since I do not want to repeat myself, I have to choose a new approach and a different form of presentation. This condensed extract will also allow me to formulate my theory more precisely and to correct some parts of my former statement of it.

In subjects of as wide a scope as the psychological examination of love, it will be advantageous to forget all that you know, or thought you knew, about it, to brush aside what you read or heard, and to approach the problem naïvely as if for the first time. The Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon III, once saw from the windows of her palace a demonstration of the hungry masses. She did not understand what the people wanted. Her adjutant said, "But, Your Majesty, the people want to eat." The Empress answered, "*Je n'en vois pas la nécessité.*" That was a cynical remark. Not in such a spirit, but rather with naïveté, we say that we do not see the necessity of love. Why is it necessary to feel romantic or sentimental about a person of the other sex? What is the meaning of this longing and craving? Is it vital, is it as necessary as breathing, as the satisfaction of hunger and thirst? Is it not possible to spend one's life without love?

These questions may sound naïve, but the answers to them lead to the core of the problem in the most direct manner. The answer is not doubtful: it is not as necessary to love as to satisfy the vital needs of hunger and thirst. Love is not as necessary as sex. Romanticists and young people will perhaps deny this, but facts are very tenacious things. It is thus undeniable that for many people and races romance is an unknown experience; early antiquity did not know of love in our sense of the word. If many millions of people through many hundreds of thousands of years of human

<sup>1</sup> *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1944

development could exist without love, how can anyone assert that it is vital?

It is obvious that children are not born loving and that they feel the need and acquire the capability of loving rather late. We are thus led to the conclusion that love is possible only after a certain phase of development is reached, that it is a product of civilization and, let me add quickly, of a certain kind of civilization. Excellent observers of the Far East assure us that love, as we understand it, is not recognized by many Oriental cultures. (Perhaps it will be useful to remember at this point that a passionate sexual desire should not be confused with romance.)

The question we ask and which we have to answer is this: Why did love become necessary? What is it, what brought it into life? What is its meaning and its purpose? I have no smooth and elegant theory to offer. I promise to examine the subject in the spirit of scientific research and as an emotional experience which may reveal its character and origin to psychology. Even a phenomenon as elusive and sometimes fantastic as love can be looked at in a realistic and sober fashion.

Some points must be clarified at first in order to avoid confusion. We have already mentioned that the differences between love and sex were so frequently neglected that it often seemed as if they were the same thing. I insist that they are different in character and origin, and I should like to prove my point. Psychoanalysis treats both phenomena as a single one, even to this day. No progress has been made in the analysis of love since Freud declared that it is nothing but aim-inhibited sex. When you consider that this concept is almost forty years old you will admit that the domain of psychoanalytical research is a slow sort of country. Psychoanalysts could speak like the Queen to Alice: "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place."

There is another cause of misunderstanding which is not restricted to the psychoanalysts, but which is shared by them: the confusion of loving with being loved. This sounds astonishing because the two experiences seem very different, yet the need of loving and the craving for being loved are often mistaken for each other. Everyone of us, you as well as I, tends to confuse these two



states of being, to believe that he is in love when he really wants to be loved or to think that he is full of affection because much affection is given to him. To make my meaning clear, I shall relate a little story which Bennett Cerf reports in *The Saturday Review of Literature*.<sup>2</sup> A little girl in an orphan asylum was a lanky, painfully unattractive child, with annoying mannerisms and secretive ways that set her apart from the other inmates. She was shunned by the children and was actively disliked by the teachers. The matron in charge of the institution longed only for a legitimate excuse to pack her off to a reform school or to get her out of the asylum in some other way.

One afternoon it looked as though the matron's opportunity had arrived. Another girl who was the child's very unwilling roommate reported that she was conducting a clandestine correspondence with somebody outside the grounds. "I've seen her write these notes every day for a week now," she reported. "Just a little while ago she took one of them and hid it in a tree near the brick wall."

The head of the asylum and her assistant could scarcely conceal their elation. "We'll soon get to the bottom of this," they agreed. "Show us where she left the note."

Sure enough, they found the note in the branches of the tree. The headmistress pounced on it, read it, and then hung her head and passed it silently to her assistant.

It read: "To whoever finds this: I love you."

Did the message of the little girl in this story express her need to love someone, whoever he might be? Certainly not! There were hundreds of people in the asylum itself whom she might have loved. What the note says, it is true, is: "To whoever finds this: I love you," but its meaning is rather: "To whoever finds this: I want to be loved by you," or "I am ready to love you if you will give me a little affection." Is not the pathetic aspect of the story the fact that the child did not feel loved? Is it not expressly reported that she was shunned by the other children and disliked by the teachers? And does not the feeling of shame which the headmistress experienced show clearly enough the cause of this situation? The little girl longs for love; that is, she wants to be

<sup>2</sup> The story was originally told by Meyer Levin in *Collier's Magazine*.

loved by someone. In effect her pathetic note asks: "Is there nobody in the world who is willing to care for me?"

But if the two processes of loving and wanting to be loved are as different as psychological observation shows them to be, how has the confusion been possible? The answer is, of course, that there is a connection between them, that they are interrelated. Whoever loves a person hopes, consciously or unconsciously, to be loved by this person. It is certainly not true that this response constitutes the condition of affection, but it is the expected requital of one's own feeling. Loving is only nominally a one-way street. Perhaps love would not have a long existence without the glimmer of this hope. The other day a navy officer, who was to go overseas, said farewell to his girl and asked her, "Will you wait for me, even if I cannot come back for years?" The girl gave the beautiful answer: "If you want me to wait." It is important to her, to all of us, to be wanted. There can be no doubt that the wish to be loved is older than the urge to love.

Tentatively I have formulated the theory that courting or wooing is originally an unconscious presentation of the desire: "Look, I would like to be loved this way." In showing tenderness and affection, we indicate what the other person should give to us. Consequently, loving is not only a way of winning love for oneself but perhaps also its aim. By following this detour we arrive at the original desire and the shift from loving to the wish to be loved is a return. To do unto others what we would have others do unto us is a primitive form of presentation by reversal. We cannot help observing that this manner of demonstration becomes necessary only when we miss affection and desire it. If I have interpreted the unconscious expressions correctly, the essential meaning finds clear expression in the song the children sing on their playground:

I like coffee,  
I like tea;  
I like girls  
When girls like me.

Some remarks about the general nature of our subject may be appropriate before we continue, for they concern the whole prob-



lem we shall deal with in the following chapters. What kind of a problem is love? Love is a problem of value; that is, the phenomenon of love is impossible to explain so long as differences of value are not felt or recognized. I emphasize differences of value because it is quite possible to recognize differences in the qualities of persons without evaluating them. Primitive and half-civilized tribes are well able to do just that. Such a differentiation is not enough.

The genesis of love becomes possible only when one person is valued more than another or rather more than many others. When you consider a person to be equal to yourself, how could you love her or him? And why should you do it? Where would be the incitement to such a strange feeling? My answer is that love is only possible when you attribute a higher value to another person than to yourself, when you see her or him as a personality who is, in certain directions at least, superior to you.

It is astonishing that we find it is necessary to assert that the problem of love is unimaginable without this discriminating sense of value. Yet such a statement was impossible so long as the psychoanalytical view of love as a form of sexual desire which has become sexless was generally accepted by psychiatrists and psychologists. The false prosperity of this theory which was conditioned by the inflation of the term sex has now passed.

It is of no consequence whether the values attributed to a certain object are real or imaginary. Perhaps the study of love is a research into an illusion, but illusionary values have psychical reality. Millions of people have suffered and died for them in the many thousands of years of the development of civilization. Having established the fact that love is possible only when individuals are differently evaluated, I shall return to the consideration that love appears relatively late in the history of mankind. The ability to evaluate and the need for evaluating people occur only after a certain phase of civilization or individual development has been reached.

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## *Emotional Readiness*

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THE STORY of individual romance has been told and sung a hundred thousand times, in a hundred thousand poems, novels, and plays. It has not been told by psychology. It so happens that the only science which should have been able to describe and explain the phenomenon became inarticulate before it. Can it not be put in the scientific language? Is there something in the subject which eludes research? Whatever the causes may be, the psychological story of love has remained untold.

The great poets have recognized that love is a psychological problem. Bassanio hears this song when he has to choose between the three boxes:

Tell me, where is fancy bred,  
Or in the heart or in the head?

To solve the problem, however, is not the task of the poet. What he presents is not a solution but an allusion. He does not explain; he hints at an explanation. He does not solve a riddle but indicates its solution in the form of a charade. Like the Greek oracle, he conceals what is implied in mysterious and meaningful images. The meaning is there, but it does not present itself and is audible only for ears able to hear what remains unsaid.

Psychologists realize that there are intangibles in this problem, but by intangible they mean something which must not be touched. The neglect, not to say avoidance, of the subject is otherwise hard to understand. Do they not believe in love? Doubt is no excuse, for faith is unnecessary. A psychologist who does research in the field of religion need not believe in God. No, it is not dis-



belief; it is diffidence in themselves which makes them shy away from the problem. They do not face it with contempt; it faces them and their helplessness.

The few abortive attempts made by psychologists to explain the strange phenomenon of romantic love all start from the same point: love is born when two persons of opposite sex feel attracted to each other. In other words, boy meets girl. But if love is born at this moment, when was it conceived? It must have existed in a hidden place long before its birth.

I think that the emotional situation before the encounter is perhaps the most important part of the untold story. The readiness is not all, but it is a good deal. Falling in love is an emotional achievement which has a long history before it finds its fulfillment. To be in love is certainly more conspicuous than the preceding processes which take place in the dark underground of the human soul and which make its development possible.

To find the answer to the question why love became necessary, we must first study the emotional situation of the person who is not but will be a lover. Definite and definable premises must exist within this person that make him ready for romance. What was John's psychical situation before he fell in love with Jane? To ask what is a future lover like may well sound as reasonable as the inquiry of the little girl: "Mother, what is a thief like?" That is difficult to say; he can be tall or small, fat or thin, blond or dark. In the same sense it cannot be said what Tom, Dick or Harry were like before they became romantic.

Nevertheless, the emotional traits can be generally described. There is a certain feeling of nostalgia, of restlessness, of discontent in John, Tom, Dick or Harry. He need not be consciously aware of this state and if he were he would perhaps give many reasons for it. He might say that he is not satisfied with his job or with the situation within his family. If he were very introspective, he might discover that the root of his troubles lies not so much in external circumstances as in a dissatisfaction with himself. Whenever, in my practice, I could penetrate into the emotional situation, I always found that romance is fostered by dissatisfaction with oneself.

The unrest, the dismay and discontent observable before the

emergence of love is a constant in the psychology of the situation. It is one end of the thread which leads to the center of the problem. However different the situations may have been in different individuals before they found themselves in romance, the common trait is this discontent. Of course the depth of this mood varies all the way from a slight uneasiness to acute distress, from scarcely perceived disquietude to emotional cataclysms. Romeo falls in love with Juliet on the rebound after his failure with Rosaline. Before he meets Juliet he is the victim of deep melancholy.

Love is an escape from oneself, an antidote for the self-dislike and sometimes even for the self-hate which a person feels. John, Tom, Dick and Harry want to get away from themselves; they take refuge in romance because they are tired of being themselves. If they are satisfied with themselves, they cannot be touched by love.

Their situation before romance came into their lives is a critical one; it has the character of an internal crisis. The question of value now appears, because the problem which all these persons have to face, though they are usually unaware of it, is that of self-valuation. What is the cause of the dissatisfaction with themselves? These persons feel unconsciously frustrated and inadequate because they compare what they are with what they wish to be, what they accomplish with what they desire to achieve. They feel frustrated because unconsciously they are afraid that they have failed. They find themselves incapable of living up to their expectations of themselves.

Pascal once wrote that the self is hateful (*"Le Moi est haïssable"*). It seems that such a feeling of self-dislike or even self-distaste appears periodically in everybody who grows up in our culture pattern. The occurrence and reoccurrence of this self-critical factor is a significant trait in ambitious characters who make high demands of themselves. This mistrust and distrust of oneself, this sense of personal inadequacy, this desire for a better self are necessary preliminaries for the development of love, which is an attempt to re-establish one's self-esteem. If we are satisfied with ourselves, why should we seek and search for another and better self? Love follows self-dislike. It succeeds depression



and sometimes despair.<sup>1</sup> From the intensity of love we can estimate how strong the feeling of personal inadequacy was from which the pendulum swings in the other direction.

The discord within the self is determined by an unconscious comparison between our actual ego and the ideal person we would like to be, who is much handsomer, better, cleverer, more courageous, and more efficient than we are. Almost everybody creates in late childhood the image of such a nobler self. We call it his ego-ideal. This fictional self, the person we are not but would like to be, is not merely self-created, is not merely a product of the individual imagination. There are certain persons in every child's life whom the child takes as patterns—for example, other children who are praised by parents and teachers and who seem to possess all virtues and achieve all things beyond his own reach. In addition to these real persons, imaginary ones affect the child through fairy tales and children's books. These fictitious characters become models after whose image the child or the adolescent would like to shape his own character. We call these figures ego-models.

They precede the creation of the ego-ideal and are, so to speak, the real or imaginary predecessors of the higher, unattainable ideal. There is an easy transition from the ego-model to the ego-ideal. We all spend a considerable emotional energy during a large part of our lifetime in the effort to catch up with this imaginary creature, the ideal self. Thoughts of it occupy our unconscious fantasy, sometimes even while we are busy and intent on realizing the aims of everyday life. We know that we have shortcomings, faults and weaknesses, and we are more or less ready to admit them. In our fantasy, in which we daydream of the ego-ideal, we are perfectionists. The ego-ideal is our wishful self. A beloved person will take its place later on; she is its trans-

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Marvell, the philosophical poet, expressed such feelings in "The Definition of Love" about four hundred years ago:

My Love is of a birth as rare  
As 'tis, for object, strange and high;  
It was begotten by Despair  
Upon Impossibility.  
Magnanimous Despair alone  
Could show me so divine a thing  
Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown  
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

formation into real life. She is the dream of a nobler self which became true. What we could not reach ourselves, she fulfills in her own person. In her the fantasy becomes flesh. The love-object has those qualities we sadly lack, achieves where we fail, fulfills the expectations we have had to renounce for ourselves. The particular kind of nostalgia we call love continues the yearning for an ideal self.

But we have already anticipated the climax of the emotional development. We are still in the realm of fantasy; the reality, and with it the realization of these dreams, is remote. In building our ego-ideal we are bound to feel the gulf between it and our actual self, and the more ambitious we are, the more keenly we feel the abyss which separates us from becoming this dream-figure. Analytical experiences show how the desire for a better self is later displaced by the figure of the beloved person. We can study this development in the story of how love originates in children. A young married woman remembers how infatuated she was as a child with another girl. She admired her and wanted always to be near her, yet was at the same time too shy to approach her, felt her heart beating when the loved girl looked at her, and so on. Before falling asleep she used to call up the image of the other girl in her imagination. This happy daydream regularly merged with the fantasy that she herself would awake tomorrow with just such golden curls instead of her own brown hair.

In thousands of instances like this we recognize that the beloved person is a substitute, the heir of our own ego-ideal. This ideal, having shifted from a fictional self to an imaginary person, finally fixes upon a real person with qualities "rare in their separate excellence, wonderful in their combination." To fall in love thus means the capture of an image. The object is created before it appears; it was there in fantasy before it is there in reality. There is no love at first sight because everything was psychologically prepared. To fall in love means to meet the imagined picture. It is this image which decides the love-choice. Dante never made the acquaintance of Beatrice, and Petrarch never knew Laura to whom his passionate sonnets were dedicated. Mark Twain fell in love with the photograph of a girl he had never seen.

The dream-picture of our future mate leads a long, shadowy



existence. We all were first in love with love. The transfer from the ideal image to the real object is an easy and uncritical process, especially for men. A girl who had seen a particular young man only once complained that she wished she could stop daydreaming about him. "I don't know him; I have too few clues to have fantasies about him. I am so much in advance of reality. Perhaps he is not as I imagine him. I want to meet him again because I have to know how and to whom to direct my daydreams." Here is some realism in the middle of romantic feeling. Many young men would be less realistic, but for both sexes the dream-object is there before the real one, and presence of the dream produces a willingness, a wish to meet it in the flesh, which amounts to wishfulness. It is a desire similar to that of a playwright who wants to see the figures he has conceived appear and move on the real stage. The curtain-raiser for this performance is always an intensification of the daydream about an ideal.

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## *The Clash of Wills*

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THE EMOTIONS felt at the encounter with the beloved person are so often and so vividly described by lovers and poets that we cannot compete with these specialists. We would wish rather to understand the unconscious process which leads to the beginning of the passion. In the preparatory phases we recognized as decisive factors a dissatisfaction with oneself due to the nonfulfillment of inner demands, the creation of an ideal ego, and its shifting to an imagined person. When the disparity between self and the ideal seems great, when the nostalgic longing for the ideal increases, that is the moment when a real object appears worthy of our affection, worthy of becoming the personification of our secret daydreams. The excellencies of this person may be real or imaginary; this distinction does not matter. We all know young men to whom their geese invariably appear to be swans. The preconceived phantom has now become flesh to such an extent that its nature cannot any more be recognized as imaginary.<sup>1</sup>

The superior values of the beloved person appear so obvious and so overwhelming that a kind of helpless wonder might be the first feeling in young people, an admiration which does not dare to approach the object and which excludes comparison with oneself. A psychoanalytical examination of the situation may reveal an unconscious counterpoint of this theme, one of envy and possessiveness, a kind of greed, a wish to own the object, to incorporate it and its endowment into oneself. When such a trait is evidenced, it becomes obvious that the person you want is the person you

<sup>1</sup> "The lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact."  
(Shakespeare.)



want to be. It may seem strange that love should begin unconsciously as envy and jealousy; but that that should be so does not seem so strange when what preceded it is reconsidered: the inner frustration of the person, the sense of his own shortcomings and unworthiness, the self-dislike and the desire for a better self. Envy is the unobserved side of the admiration which the beloved object arouses. Love may be said to be born out of the spirit of unconscious envy and jealousy.

Has this other person not all you want? Would it not be wonderful to be she or he? The individual who wants to get rid of his troublesome self would like to change places with this admired person. Here is the point at which romance is conceived, true love as well as infatuation, its *fata morgana*. Love which does not tire in giving was once, in its hidden origin, an urge to take away, to take possession of and to own for oneself the physical and psychical excellencies of the object. Love is thus the overcoming of these unconscious tendencies of envy, jealousy, and greed. It is a successful attempt to spare oneself the growing discomfort of these emotions. Goethe anticipated this psychological insight when he said, "Against the great superiority of another there is no remedy but love." Of course romance signifies only one of the ways out of this emotionally tense situation. There are other exits—for instance, hate, or withdrawal of interest, which means indifference.

In the analytical examination of its unconscious beginning love is not the saccharine emotion revealed in romantic stories; there is envy, jealousy, a reaching out for the object in a spirit of rapacity and covetousness. The lover wants to embrace and treat his sweetheart tenderly, but the first unconscious tendencies are greed, a desire to seize and to own her, to force her to be his. These drives are made more insistent by the real or seeming casualness on the part of the beloved person, for the lover is sure to feel acutely the contrast between his emotional attitude and that of the object. A young man said about a girl who seemed to be aloof, "She makes me feel small and insignificant." A young girl about a man, "How dare he be so sure of himself." The easy grace, the calm disinterest, the remoteness and the devastating imperturbability of the adored object work upon the man not only

as a tantalizing contrast to his own restlessness, but even more definitely as a challenge which he has to meet. That the girl is not touched by the turmoil he feels in himself rouses the wish in him to fill her with his own desire: "She shall awake and sing!" She appears not only imperturbable, self-contained, and self-sufficient, but also inaccessible, and this attitude stimulates all the impulses of conquest in the man. A man who thought of a certain girl was surprised himself when he mumbled, "I will have her; by God, I will have her love me."

The tension which existed in him before is now felt as a tension between him and the object. I assert that this tension is one of the essential psychological conditions for the development of romance. Without it a person may be liked very much, she may arouse attraction, sympathy, companionship and compatibility, but she cannot arouse romantic feelings. Without this tension you can think of a woman with devotion, but you cannot feel her like a virus in your blood. This creative tension is such a necessary prerequisite of romance that its renewal and maintenance preserves its existence. Where there is no such creative tension, there can be a sexual urge but no incentive to love, not this certain feeling, this breathless suspense, this promise of happiness called romance. Love is an attempt to bridge a gulf between two persons, but the need for the bridge emphasizes the existence of such an abyss.

A touch of strangeness and remoteness seems to help this tension, is perhaps one of the conditions which favors its development, and is an incentive to the wish to conquer. During the last few years I have seen many girls whose great ambition is to be rough and ready pals to young men. They seem to think it necessary to be very chummy with the other sex, to efface the psychical differences of the sexes, to use vulgar language and even tell dirty stories in order to attract the men. I think they are mistaken and that they thus unconsciously destroy their own chances with the young men. The familiarity which they seek need not breed contempt. On the contrary, it may breed good comradeship and an excellent brother-sister-like relationship, but that is certainly not the emotional situation out of which romance springs. The absence of the creative tension prevents the development of romance



or nips it in the bud. To be a pal with a young man is fine, for all kinds of experiences and adventures may be shared with him, but not the supreme experience of love. Love arrives at psychical unity, but it starts from the awareness of a particular form of difference.

An unavoidable step in the progress of love is the transformation of the unconscious envy in which the passion has one of its roots. If the envy does not disappear, it leads to feelings of hostility. There is no friendly envy. This emotion has all the seeds of hate in it, especially when one is dissatisfied with oneself. This kind of envy is the continuation of a feeling from the nursery and is best expressed in the words "Me too" you often hear children say. It easily changes to resentment against the privileged one. The next phase of the unconscious development is thus characterized by hostility against the "beloved" person. Hostility, or hate, is an unconscious precursor of love, although, of course, affection may not necessarily follow it.<sup>2</sup>

Under the stimulus of envy a strong attempt is made to devalue the envied and admired person, to pull her down in one's thoughts, to smirch and stain her image, which threatens to expel all others and to govern the soul in a totalitarian manner. This emotional revolution against the dictatorship of a single person is sometimes successful. Often it is a vain attempt to preserve one's freedom and independence. It happens sometimes—our playwrights and novelists portray the situation frequently—that this inner conflict even leads to an open clash of wills with the loved one, to violent scenes. Fierce vindictiveness can arise between two persons destined to become lovers and may create an atmosphere like that before a tempest. Sometimes there is only a silent suspense between the two people, each jockeying for position, fencing for an advantage. Their advances and retreats are comparable to the movement of a dancing couple. When the man moves one leg forward, the lady puts her leg back, and vice versa. The will to conquer and to dominate can be felt consciously at this time. It is

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it may be useful to remember that this concept, in which hostility appears as a necessarily unconscious predecessor of love, differs decidedly from the idea of ambivalence in psychoanalysis.

then often impossible to determine whether this need or the craving of love is the stronger one.

The attempt to dismiss the image from one's fantasy frequently fails because its power has become too strong. This is then the moment for a counterattack undertaken with greatest energy by the opposing tendencies. A counterwave overwhelms the person, often when he already feels safe, out of danger. Men and women (but men more often) lull themselves into such treacherous security shortly before they are caught napping. Sometimes their reluctance to give in to their passion amounts to self-pretense. ("Go away nearer.") A girl in such a situation said, "I know that I do not want to love him, but I wish I would not think so often of him." Sometimes even the fear of falling in love comes too late. It is as if a person in jail became panicky at the thought of being arrested.

The effect of the victorious counterattack is that all the negative feelings are swept away, and tenderness and affection carry the day. Soon no trace remains that love obtained its victory only after a furious fight in the nether world.



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## *The Essence of Romance*

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ROMANCE at its climax and in its fulfillment, as we study it in the young couple John and Jane, seems to have effaced all previous phases, to have erased all troubles and difficulties within the ego. The old desire for self-improvement, for a better, nobler self, has disappeared or rather is realized in the beloved person. The ego became enriched and enlarged. It is not necessary any more to be perfect oneself because the love-object appears as the personification of perfection. There is no reason to be dissatisfied with oneself and one's lot. On the contrary, the lover thinks he is a "lucky dog." Has he not found a treasure undeservedly? He feels a humility he did not know he was capable of, yet at the same time he feels proud. A girl who had fallen in love for the first time said to her mother, "I thank you for having given birth to me." With the acquisition of a better self, represented by the object, the lover seems to be raised beyond himself. He feels a great reservoir of force and energy in him which was unutilized before, a sudden uplift of the ego. There is a new lease on life because of the encouragement and self-confidence of fulfillment. Under the spell of this enchantment, envy and greed have disappeared. Who loves wants to give, and his appetite in giving seems never to be appeased. Hostility has given place to tenderness; envy, to kindness.

The question which interests us here is: Did the individual reach his or her psychological aim in romance? Does he get what he wished to receive? Does romance solve the problem which unconsciously troubled him? If it does, we understand what the powerful contribution of love to human happiness is, why Jane

and John and thousands of couples like them are so radiant and satisfied. We saw John at first unconsciously dissatisfied with himself because he did not come up to his own inner demands; then we saw him envious of Jane, of her endowments, her calmness, and self-confidence. We observed the grudge and resentment he unconsciously felt towards her, much like that of every underprivileged person towards the fortunate, an urge to conquer and to dominate her. None of these emotions can be seen on the surface any more. They have been swept away by the counter-wave. It seemed that fulfillment in romance means the relinquishing of all these unconscious claims.

If we look deeper, however, below the psychical surface, we shall recognize that they have been submerged rather than eliminated. The aims of love are reached in a subtle way by a sort of psychological compromise. I have already said that the inner dissatisfaction vanished because the beloved took the place of the desired better self. The ego-ideal has been fulfilled by proxy. The desire to own the object is satisfied in the gentle form of romance. The conquering impulse has also reached its aim. By means of an unconscious detour, the wish to make the envied and admired person one's own has come true. The harmony is now so vibrantly felt that the lovers assert they are not two persons any more but a single one. In this oneness, in this psychical incorporation, the concealed tendencies become victorious although they are now submerged. These vanquished impulses continue their existence subterraneously and form an underground movement while love governs. They are always ready to break through if this government is weakened. Their power shows itself when romance fails, when the person again becomes dissatisfied, first with the loved one and eventually with himself.

The glamour can vanish as if it had never existed. All the motions of love can be there without its emotions. The lover's feelings can be compared to those of a man who continues to go to church after he has ceased to believe. A man said in psychoanalysis, "It was in another age that I kissed her, or it was another I." Sweet dreams can now turn into a nightmare. A backswing of the pendulum occurs, and with it all the old feelings are revived: hostility appears again, the lust to dominate, and finally envy and



jealousy. I shall not deal here with these phases because I have treated of their psychology in a previous book.

The French writer Paul Gerdary once remarked that the history of a love affair "is the drama of its fight against time." It seems that time is usually on the side of the repressed tendencies and that romance has to perish. Sometimes love survives while passion evaporates. A transformation into companionship and friendship takes place, in which some of the most precious traits of the past romance can be preserved. At this point the creative tension, out of which romance sprang, is decreased to a minimum. Instead of feeling passionate the couple now care for each other, an emotion of a different sort, more stable and constant.

We have now reached the point where we can answer some of the questions which aroused our curiosity. Why is love necessary? It became necessary with the cultural development of the personality. It is intimately connected with the increasing demand which a person makes on himself and which he cannot fulfill. The desire for love originates from the feeling that I am tired of being I. In the place of the ego-ideal of a fictitious better self, the lover accepts the love-object as the realization of his daydreams. Love is not self-seeking, but seeks a better self. This passion can only arise in an individual after he has become able to recognize higher values in another. Whoever discriminates thus must already have reached a certain cultural level. Without this recognition and without the wish to be the possessor of those higher values, no person could possibly fall in love. No such evaluation affects the sex desire, which, according to psychoanalytical theory, is the origin of love.

The character of romance is akin to that of ambition, to that fault by which the angels fell. It is based upon the consuming desire to gain stature for oneself, to achieve some higher purpose, to become much better than one actually is.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally some persons understand well that the original ambition concerning themselves is replaced in love by this other ambition. A girl said to me the other day, "If I can't be anything special myself, I want

<sup>1</sup> In my previous book, *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, I emphasized the resemblance of love and enthusiasm to artistic and religious zeal. I was not wrong to characterize it in this way. It is a member of this family, but ambition is its next of kin.

to have someone special for my husband." We do not acknowledge the great part which is played in our civilization by the emotional need of women to be proud of their men. Most women feel it wrong to be in love where they despise. They are ashamed of being emotionally involved with a man whom they cannot respect and they then resent the man and themselves. Not every candle wants to give light, but every candle wishes to shine. Love shifts self-importance and self-aggrandizement to interest in the object, who now becomes the important person to such an extent that the self is sacrificed in its favor and all pursuit of personal honor is renounced. It cannot be accidental that we use similar expressions for passionate love and ambition: devoured or consumed by it, burning ambition, and so forth. It is the same flame which burns in both. This kinship also explains why the two cannot reach their aims at the same time. They are rival powers. He who remains very ambitious for himself cannot be a passionate lover. The man who falls in love has for the time being given up his ambition to reach his ego-ideal. He has changed this ambition for another one, that of conquering and owning the love-object who has taken the place of the ego-ideal. You can worship several gods, it is true, but you cannot worship them with the same devotion and zeal. Perhaps this affinity of love and ambition can help us to understand why the craving for love has a much more violent character in men than in women and why, nevertheless, it cannot be the whole content of a man's life. At all events love is more closely related to ambition than to the sexual urge.

Someone has compared platonic love to a gun you did not know was loaded. Well, that sounds witty and you smile, as always, when some pretentious idea is unmasked. But then when you become serious again you realize that it is not a brilliant joke. You consider that what is called platonic love is certainly not the idea as it appears in Plato's dialogues—far from it—and that love, in our sense, is certainly not characterized by such a mistake. That love between men and women is in most cases accompanied by sexual desire has nothing to do with the nature of love itself. A chemist who examines the fusion of two materials will not assert that they are the same or have the same properties. Their affinity does not mean that they are identical or that their formulas are



the same. To misjudge love as aim-inhibited sex on account of this close association was one of the fatal blunders of psychoanalysis. It will be our task to find out how the fusion of sex and love took place, what preceded it, and what are the results.

What we found about the origin and development of love leaves no doubt, it seems to me, about the two following conclusions: Love is not originated in the sexual urges, but is a product of the individual ego-development, especially of the desire for self-improvement and fulfillment.

Love is an emotional reaction to intense unconscious feeling of envy and greed and of the resulting aggressive and possessive tendencies towards the object. It would be appropriate to characterize romantic love as an aim-inhibited desire of conquest or of the possessive urge.

I do not pretend to have answered all questions concerning the character and development of romance, but I have reached a point in research which comes nearer to the essence of the problem than previous attempts of psychologists. Whenever such a point is reached, new questions become apparent. The investigator becomes aware that his efforts, which seemed at first to have solved a problem, amount only to the modest achievement of having unearthed the hiding-places which kept others from the sight. Research means moving question marks from one point to another.

Many questions, old ones and new ones, should be discussed, but the place reserved within the limits of our subject for the psychology of romance is restricted. We shall mention only two which deserve the attention of psychologists. The intimate association of love and sex was so conspicuous, and sex was and is so permanently placed in the foreground by psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, that love's origin from the dark soil of the ego-drives was long overlooked. That love comes into existence as a reaction to the will to conquer and to dominate, both aroused by envy and greed, will forever mark its character. The victory over these unconscious forces of rapacity, the glorious birth out of this chaos, does not mean that these titanic impulses are permanently conquered. They have gone underground, but they do not stop their secret work, and they have to be placated from time to time. A compromise has to be made with them. There are odd mixtures

of tenderness and domination, love and brutality, strange fusions and alloys of these two opposing drives. The two old enemies sometimes come to terms at the cost of the love-object.

The other problem concerns the escape character of romance. "Needles and pins, needles and pins; when a girl marries, her trouble begins." Is this true? Did her troubles not begin before, and did she not try to run away from them into romance and marriage? Then they begin anew. We must not forget that at the root of romance was a flight caused by inner insecurity and dissatisfaction. Only by overcoming this deep discord was loving made possible. A person cannot love unless he has to a certain extent regained his courage—unless, in the language of gambling, he has recouped his losses. Love gave reassurance, built up the ego, but the security thus obtained is not a permanent one.<sup>2</sup> During psychoanalysis a girl said, "Whenever I get unsure of myself, I don't like him any more." Another woman said, "That I am older than he, that I am not attractive and that I have nothing to be proud of freezes me towards him." A man who does not accept himself and does not regain enough self-respect will not be able to love. Who has not courage enough and cannot get enough self-confidence will not win another's affection. Only the brave deserve the fair.

<sup>2</sup> It is not yet well understood to what degree unhappy love is unconsciously stage-managed by the persons themselves in order to satisfy unconscious tendencies of guilt and self-punishment. That this management exists is proved not only by the choice of inappropriate objects but also by wrong steps and self-defeating actions. An iron determination to fail directs all movements of these luckless lovers until they finally attain their unconscious goal of frustration. They have a kind of sixth sense which always finds ways and means to turn every love-experience into failure. The need for a degraded love-object is an expression of an unconscious masochistic attitude or of a low self-evaluation.



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## *If Love Were Love . . .*

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PEOPLE RARELY doubt the existence of love, but many disclaim it. In many years of practice I have not encountered a person who asserted that he had never in his life believed in love. Most men I questioned admitted that once, for a shorter or longer period of time, they had been in love, but that they were now convinced that love is nonsense or at best a juvenile feeling. Some believe themselves to be hard-boiled realists. When they maintain that love is nothing but concealed sexual desire, they do not realize that such a statement is more fantastic than a tale from *The Arabian Nights*. It is remarkable that these people do not waste their time with doubts but are emphatically sure of being right. Among intellectuals doubts are expressed in a witty form. There is a scene in the novel *The Way into the Open* by Arthur Schnitzler, in which one writer asks another, "Tell me, Nurnberger, do you still believe in death? About love I do not even ask any more." An American writer suggested quite seriously the other day that the word love should disappear from the English language because it has adopted a self-mocking connotation.

Between believers and unbelievers exists an immense abyss. There is no gradual transition; there is a gulf like that between devoutness and atheism. Or to use a simple comparison from the dictionary: one reads the meanings of affection and tenderness given to the word love, and then finds, some lines farther on, a new meaning of the term: "4) in many games (tennis) = nothing."

While speaking of these sceptics, I repeatedly was reminded of a man whom I treated in Vienna many years ago. I recalled, not the peculiar features of the case, but a single sentence spoken in

an analytical session and the circumstances in which it was said. The patient was a young man, a typical intellectual who came for analysis because of a rather serious obsession. The doubts which accompanied his neurosis concerned a great part of his life, as well as his relationship to a somewhat older girl, who did not conceal from him that she wished he would marry her. The relationship, which antedated his analysis, and which became a permanent one during it, passed through many ups and downs as often happens when two people, both very neurotic, become victims of the bitter contest between hostility and affection. Both nice and decent persons, they brought out the worst in each other.

In his *Discourse on the Passions of Love* Pascal remarks once that when one does not love too much, one does not love enough. That epigram sounds impressive, but, contemplated soberly, it is nonsense. Too much is more than enough, and this superfluity can be too much of a good thing and become a nuisance. A little love goes a long way, and too much of it goes too far. It becomes obvious that the concealed descent of love from impulses of greed and rapacity will determine its vicissitudes. If it reaches extremes, it overreaches itself and reveals itself too clearly as a reaction to possessiveness and to the will to conquer. The submerged tendencies reappear then on the surface.

This woman, impatient to have the man marry her, could not refrain from letting him know how often she felt hurt by real or imagined slights. Victimized by her violent inclination, she felt she could have suffered his lack of consideration better if he had not left her in suspense regarding his real intentions. "I do not want him to exist," she said once, "or if he exists, I should not want to love him. I wish I could extinguish him in me or be together with him all the time." She well understood that his neurosis made it extremely difficult for him to arrive at a decision. She realized that she had to wait, but her impatience was intensified by the fact that all of their friends and acquaintances considered them to be engaged. Certain circumstances, which I cannot discuss here, made it impossible to contradict this rumor. She often felt not only hurt but also angry with the man and his permanent doubts.

Sometimes she was tempted to shout, "Stop making up your



mind!" In her jealousy she was offended whenever he preferred other company to hers, and she often brought slight pressure to bear, so that she might be with him. Her impatience forced her to telephone him almost daily, to take the first step toward making dates, and to force him into certain minor decisions which were chiefly in his own interests. More realistic than the man, she knew that the situation could remain unchanged for a longer time because the relationship had already lasted some years. In her ambiguous position it became more and more necessary to have him make a choice. The best part of her life was past. In a combination of affection and stubbornness she was bent on marrying just this man in spite of all of his shortcomings, which she clearly saw. She did not go out with other men because she wanted to be at home when he called. She did not want to let him know how much she depended on him, but her rather impulsive nature and her lack of self-control often caused her to lose her temper, and she gave vent to it against her better judgment. Stormy scenes and arguments, sometimes provoked by the suspense in which the man kept her, occurred frequently. They were not lovers' quarrels, but rather haters' quarrels between two people devoted to each other. These were regularly followed by reconciliations, which in turn led to further differences. They often discussed to what extent they loved each other and why and why not. But you do not discuss love; you live it. It was almost a reversal of the traditional pattern. The girl wooed the man while he held out and was reticent and coy. It was also true that her impatience was sometimes augmented by unfulfilled sexual wishes.

Yet the man was attached to her and was well able to appreciate her excellent human and intellectual qualities. His sexual life revealed the typical attitude of a large group of men who are sexually inhibited with women whom they respect and whom they consider as equals to their mothers and sisters, while they have no such restraint with others whom they do not esteem and even despise. Prevented by many motives (which became clear in analysis) from coming to a decision, and afraid to lose his freedom, he superficially yielded to her pressure on minor issues. He enjoyed his bachelor life in spite of recurring phases of depression and loneliness, and maintained a polite but determined resistance

against the subtle efforts of his lady-friend to bring him into the harbor of married life. On the other hand, he was most unwilling to loosen the tie which linked them together. He always knew how to reconcile the girl and to charm her when she felt hurt, and he used his power over her to keep her in suspense. Whenever she made an effort to free herself from this form of bondage, his subtle black magic did the trick. While pretending not to be jealous at all, he cleverly took advantage of her need for him and kept other suitors away from her. His attitude seemed, then, to be that of a figure in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*: "I cannot force thee to love me, but I shall not give freedom to thee."

He did not tire of stressing in analysis how embarrassed and angry he was because the girl forced him, in her domineering way, to be in her company, because she made him go to dinners and picture shows when he wanted to be elsewhere, because she kept him on the telephone when he wanted to work. He was often so furious that he complained bitterly about her possessiveness. Too weak to say No, he was unable to admit to himself that he took a concealed delight in this enslavement, against which he seldom revolted. It was obvious that he often arranged a situation which made him dependent. He was certainly not the true lover, but he had a strong attachment for the girl. He expressed his grievance once in his excited way by saying, "She is terribly possessive, and she always wants to grasp, to grab and clutch me. She does not relinquish me for a day. She gets me into her claws and does not leave me alone." He finished his accusations in despair about the girl's possessiveness: "And she says that she cares for me, that she loves me dearly. If love were love!"

The last remark, spoken in his impulsive manner, came to my mind frequently when I had to deal with neurotic patients who had difficulties in their love-life. What he meant by it was very clear. What people call their love is not love at all. It is lust for power, an urge to conquer and to possess, or crude sexual desire. If what is known as love were only a craving for companionship, regard for another's welfare, giving and taking of tenderness and acceptance of the other's shortcomings, life would be beautiful. His words did not deny the existence of love, but they complained about its nature.



Similarly wishful, a religious person might say: "If Christianity were Christianity! If only the millions of people who profess the faith of Christ were really filled with the spirituality of the Savior who preached on the hills of Galilee! But they adhere only to the letter which killeth and not to the spirit which gives life." Was it not Samuel Butler who asserted that the moral concepts of Christianity have never been practiced on earth? It is the old story about the abyss which separates the pure idea from its earthly manifestation, the glamorous promise of the ideal from the dimness and dullness of reality. Such a difference is unavoidable because the ideal is beyond the reach of mortal beings. It is not merely a claim which is unfulfilled. It is also an unrealizable demand. When you shoot with a pistol, you must aim a bit higher than the target in order to hit it. If you aim too high, however, you will miss it.

What can be said about the point the patient made? It is noteworthy that in his complaint he did not consider the nature of his own insufficient affection. Obviously his own capacity to love was more restricted than the girl's. He was undoubtedly devoted to her in his own way, but his was certainly a peculiar way. Did he not find a secret pleasure in the subtle torture to which he submitted her? He complained about her possessiveness, but was he less possessive? Did he not bring her back to him with an invisible thread, jealous of her possible liberty?

So much for the personal side of the case. What about the general view? We must admit that the patient was to a great extent justified in exclaiming, "If love were love!" All kinds of emotion are termed love; it is a very much misused word. But here is a deeper problem and not only a question of classification.

The reaction against the forces of domination and possessiveness cannot entirely eliminate them. The original material from which love is made is present also in the new transformation of the power-drive. Love started with the desire to be like the admired object; it often ends in the wish to model the object in one's own image. This tendency seems to indicate that the old repressed lust of conquest finally gets the upper hand, and naturally this concealed wish can result in a clash of wills, in a silent duel in the dark.

This new element of love, which is produced by an unconscious

revolution and reaction, resembles the urge to conquer. It is the offspring of the old tyrant, and it has a domineering and despotic taint in its blood, although it is the gentlest form of tyranny.

Insight into the nature of love satisfies only to a certain extent the grievance against it. The phenomenon has to be considered in terms of the individual; love is good for a person if the person is good for love. When two persons are in love, each strives to be the other, but this tendency can almost reach its goal in a peaceful manner. Old couples who have lived long together often appear to have a great physical resemblance. It seems as if the old wish that was once a passionate and ferocious urge was gently fulfilled by time.

When one rises up high enough in the air, everything appears to be very small. True, there is an abyss between the idea and the reality of love, but why sigh for what is not and scorn what is? Psychological facts can be as little disavowed as biological facts. Nature does not acknowledge the kind of human reasoning which says: It cannot be so, because it should not be so. The lover does his best with the best he has. It is possible to be somewhat realistic and face facts even when they concern illusions which we cherish.

Too often we receive our ideas about emotions from literature and pictures, not from life. We are then astonished and disappointed when reality does not coincide with our expectations. Also ideals need not remain childish; they can come of age. Our children sometimes have preconceived notions which surprise us, but they outgrow them. When my family emigrated to the United States seven years ago, my daughter Theodora, then four years old, asked her mother while disembarking in New York, "Mummy, why do all these people speak Shirley Templeish?" She had recognized that the speech of the people around her sounded similar to that of the little star in a picture she had seen in Europe. She must have thought that Shirley Temple was the owner or creator of this language. She has discovered since that English is not Shirley's property alone. It is high time that we adults learn that love in reality is unlike its Hollywood image. How much better it is to be young and learn than to be old and know!



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## *A New Power Enters the Realm of Sex*

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HOW DID romance enter the realm of the crude sex-drive? We know that it came from another country, that it is not a native of this any-man's or any-woman's land. It is not camouflaged sex, as the crusaders of psychoanalysis assert. It does not come as a welcome guest, but is at first treated as an intruder and a nuisance. Some persons see it even now as such. There is no doubt that love is an immigrant in the old continent of instincts, an immigrant unrelated to the natives, who were, I am sure, at first startled by its arrival.

In the individual life, love can develop only after a phase is reached in which the personal differences between persons are not only recognized, but are recognized and evaluated. This evaluation presupposes a developed mental state. A child who has reached the phase in which he compares himself with another and feels inferior to and envious of this other child (are these not the psychological requirements of love?) cannot be in early infancy. Sex, which does not recognize personal value, can be aroused early, but not love. Psychoanalysts often state that a premature sexual development is a sign of early mental keenness. I beg to differ, as I so often have before. Here, as everywhere, they tend to confuse sex and love. A premature sexual interest and activity expresses a constitutional state of the child or can be the result of overstimulation from outside. An early capability for feeling affection, on the other hand, would really prove that a child is unusually gifted, because it would mean that the child has early experienced and recognized individual differences and values. As a matter of fact, teachers and pedagogues, as well as parents, observe with

approval early affection in children, while they disapprove of any signs of premature sexuality.

What are the objects of children's first loves? The answer is often too readily given: grown-up persons, parents, nurses, teachers. But this answer is one of those glib statements which contain very little truth. Of course, children learn to be affectionate with the grown-ups who surround them and take care of them, but their real affection belongs to other children. Grown-up persons are beyond their reach; they are, in effect, of another species from the child's point of view. To admire them and to dream of conquering them would mean that the child already feels nearer to them, comparable to them in some way or other. But before he reaches this phase, grown-up persons are psychologically too distant to become love-objects. You do not desire the stars.

Is it not one of the greatest and most intensely felt wishes of any child to grow up, to be like these persons whom he admires? Indeed it is, but this wish, if it occurs to the child genuinely and is not introduced into his mind by the talk of parents and older children, comes rather late. Even so, it remains for a long time a mere thought without reality, a theoretical possibility. A patient remembered from his early boyhood that he could be convinced only against his will that in time he himself would grow up to be a man. For a longer time he retained his original view that men and boys are sharply different, two clean-cut groups, and that men were always men and boys would always be boys. (This contrasts with the proverbial sentence that men will always be boys.) There was, he felt, an unbridgeable gulf between these two groups.

The first real love-object of the child is another child, one who is admired and envied and hated, one whose superiority is recognized, though, of course, not readily admitted. The other surprising discovery which awaits the psychologists is that this early love-object is usually of the same sex. This is not surprising to the psychoanalysts, for they have always asserted that homosexuality is one of the many perverted traits of infantile sex-life. Our view, however, is but small comfort to them, since we do not refer to homosexuality, but to affection for the same sex, which is a quite different phenomenon.

It is easy to understand why the first love-objects are chosen



among children of the same sex. There is, of course, a congeniality among boys. They have the same interests, feel the same ambitions, play the same games. They pride themselves on the same endowments and appreciate the same abilities, dexterities, and ingenuities. They have no community of interest with girls at this age. Boys do not seek the company of little girls, and some time later even avoid them, so that a boy who plays with girls is ridiculed and called a sissy. Out of the admiration, envy, and possessiveness of one boy for another often develops the first, somewhat shy love. In overcoming the original negative feelings, the little boy takes a fancy to another boy who is stronger or cleverer or more intelligent than himself. This second boy becomes his ego-ideal. I need not repeat that this affection has nothing to do with sex activity. The sex-drive goes its own way. It is very possible—any psychoanalyst can confirm this—that the particular boy who feels affectionate towards another, admired boy, has some sexual play with a little girl or even with another boy whom he does not particularly like or admire. Sex and affection are thus shown to be separated early.

If the first object-choice of the boy—of course, the same is valid for girls, whose love-objects are other admired girls—is a child of the same sex, then love for the opposite sex has to be explained. I emphasize again that the appearance of love for the opposite sex becomes mysterious, not that of sexual wishes. This, however, is not seen as a psychological problem by those who consider love as aim-inhibited sex. For them the inhibited sex-drive is deflected into tenderness. It is a problem for us who assert that love is different. How is it possible that, slowly or suddenly, children of the other sex become love-objects? Is there not a gulf between them? Do not boys prefer the company of boys and girls their girl-friends?

This abyss exists, and the psychical effort to span it is a new event in the boy's life. Two factors apparently are combined in their effects. The far-reaching emotional changes of puberty increase the unrest of the boy. They deepen the dissatisfaction with himself and intensify the desire to satisfy the demands of his troublesome ego, to reach beyond himself. At the same time there is a feeling in the boy that the company of other boys is no longer

fully satisfactory. Perhaps they remind him too much of himself. The same emotional development—with a few differences founded on the divergent characters of sex—appears in girls. The first factor is, thus, in the nature of a push away, a yearning to get away from oneself and others who are too like oneself. In other words, there is a kind of unconscious dislike of oneself and of the old gang.

On the other hand there is a pull. The sex-drive points the way, which is directed towards new objects. But it is not the sex-drive which propels the person to take this path. Sex does not provide the motive for following the path, but is merely a sign-post on the road of a wanderer who wishes to escape from himself. The push and the pull determine together the shift of affection to the other sex. The growing dissatisfaction with himself and with his contemporaries of the same sex and the increased sexual needs of puberty co-operate in the change of direction which affection now takes.

I hope it is obvious that this view cannot be understood in the same sense as the psychoanalytical misconception which represents love as an arrested sex-development. What is pointed out here means only that the turning of affection to the other sex is partly explained by the influence of the intensified sex-urge of puberty. The origin and character of love are in no way determined by this late development. Desire for affection was there before.

In young love's stirrings no sexual urges are felt towards the object. There is a yearning to hold the beloved girl, not to let her go, to make her one's own, but this possessiveness is not thought of by the boy in a sexual sense. He means to make her his own, not to "make" her, as the slang expression says. There is much more possessiveness than sex in this tenderness, more greediness than sensuality. How does Juliet speak to Romeo? She wishes he should go, yet go

. . . no farther than a wanton's bird  
Who lets it hop a little from his hand,  
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,  
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,  
So loving jealous of his liberty.



"So loving jealous of his liberty;" that is not the language of sex, but of possessiveness in the charming disguise of tenderness.

What are the qualities the boy admires in a girl? What is he envious of? What does the girl admire in him and of what does she become "loving jealous"? The answers to these questions must be very informative about the development of romance in its first manifestations. I propose the following: Originally beauty is admired in the girl and strength in the boy. Or is it rather the combination of strength and courage which attracts the girl? The qualities which are first admired and envied are physical ones, related to the body of the object. Slowly, and by and by, they are replaced by other qualities. Beauty then is no longer the only value. Gracefulness in movement, gentleness, refinement, and other qualities which express the personality of the girl are also appreciated. The change is summarized when we say that the boy is at first attracted by the femaleness of girls and then by their femininity. Of course, the attractions of the first kind continue to work while the others develop. Girls who admired first only the strength and courage of the boys begin to appreciate their decisiveness and cleverness, to wonder at and to envy their mental energy and activity. ("What that man can't think of! There's nothing he doesn't know!") The new form of admiration which thus develops from the old one is a transition from attraction due to appearance to appreciation of character. The previously admired qualities are still valued, but the new qualities enlarge the original feeling and endow it with a different and colorful shading.

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## *Bridged by a Fantasy*

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IN THE preceding chapter an unexpected question came to the surface. The first love-objects, the persons originally admired and envied most, are of the same sex. How does the shift of admiration to the other sex occur? If the beloved person (not the sexually desired person!) is the representative of one's own ego-ideal, how is it possible, for instance, that the ego-ideal of a boy can be so transformed that he falls in love with a girl? Such a process is very unlikely. Perhaps I failed to make it quite clear that the beloved person does not really represent the ego-ideal, but becomes a substitute for it. The object does not become identified with the ideal better self, but it so complements the ego that the drive for self-perfection becomes superfluous.

Let me freely admit that I have no ready-made explanation of the change of love-objects. At this point of my research I can only present a theory which needs much more verification than is available to me at this time. I do not pretend to present the final solution of the problem, but rather an attempted approach to it. I know the weaknesses of my theory, and I am ready to drop it immediately as soon as a better one emerges.

As I have already stated, the great transformations of puberty are to a great extent responsible for the transition of affection to the other sex. The intensified sexual urge shows the way which the craving for tenderness will take. At a certain phase of this individual development strange new daydreams occur which center around the other sex, or rather around an individual of the other sex. We learned about them first in the psychoanalysis of masturbation-fantasies, in which a partner of the other sex is imag-



ined as present. In these fantasies boys or girls play a double rôle. A boy imagines, for instance, how a girl he knows or an imagined girl would behave in certain situations. In many masturbation-fantasies the boy himself speaks the words he imagines the girl would say, makes her gestures or imitates her movements, usually, of course, in imaginary love-making. It is clear that taking over the rôle of the girl as well as his own is the result of an emergency situation. The partner is absent, and one actor has to play two rôles.

These sexual fantasies are actually continuations of a thought-play in childhood, of a fantasy which starts from the imagined possibility: If I had been born a girl (for the girl: If I had been born a boy). Similar childish reveries or thought-plays center about the wish to be a king, a queen, and so forth. The continuation of such a tentative thought, of such a thought-rehearsal of an imagined change of sex, then proceeds in the following direction: What would I like to look like then? What would I like to be like if the change were possible? This daydream has a pattern analogous to that followed by the continuation of the idea "*Si j'étais roi!*" This thought-possibility, this odd fancy, occurs to any child soon after he has discovered, not the sex-difference itself, but its emotional importance, after he has observed that members of the other sex look and behave differently, and after he has evaluated these divergencies in his thoughts for some time. (The shape and the mind of the other sex have something slightly incredible for the young ones.) That such fleeting thoughts, such passing fancies, are there in any boy—and, of course, to a greater extent in any girl—can be ascertained in psychoanalysis. They recur in the unconscious fantasies of adolescents and form a neglected but important element in many symptoms of neurotic and psychotic persons later on.<sup>1</sup>

I would not attribute these fancies to the original and biological factor of individual bisexuality, but to the imaginative power of children in their thought-plays. Most of these fantasies relapse into the unconscious because they so emphatically contra-

<sup>1</sup> The occurrence of such fantasies did not, of course, escape the psychological observation of Freud, but he deals with them only in connection with the genesis of homosexuality, of the feminine form of masochism, and of the castration-complex of men and women.

dict the unchangeable fact of one's own sex. They are pushed aside and condemned as silly. Of course, other emotional influences besides common sense work upon them; the child is soon consciously reluctant to adopt the rôle of the other sex and begins to prefer his own, which, he imagines, is the desirable and enviable one. Apparently—I like to express myself cautiously on this point—these fantasies lead a subterranean existence for a long time afterward. They rarely, as in homosexuals, penetrate to the level of conscious thinking, but they obtain renewed power from concealed sources. They cannot break through in their original form, but they reappear, transformed in the daydreams of puberty: What kind of girl would I like or love? How should the girl I would love look and behave?

The fantastic figure of oneself in the rôle of the other sex is now replaced by the dream figure of a possible love-object of the other sex. The desire to be like a person of the opposite sex gives place to the wish to have that other person as one's own. The daydream of being a boy appears to have even greater consequence for the girl than the opposite wish has for the boy, at least in our culture-pattern where the rôle of a man might appear more enviable for the adolescent girl than that of the female for the boy.<sup>2</sup> It will be understood that the figure of a supplementary, sexually different ego is a creation of the imagination, but not a merely playful one. It reveals not only admiration, but also envious or hostile tendencies toward the other sex. The bridge from such emotional foundations to love has already been considered, but needs to be restated here.

This neo-psychoanalytical theory tries to explain how the transfer of affection from the same sex to the other was prepared. The individual dissatisfaction with oneself has continued and has displaced its effect. The attraction to the other sex was facilitated by the transformation of a secret daydream in which the ego appears in an idealized figure of the opposite sex. This fantasy of a feminine or masculine counterpart of oneself is the missing link in the chain of factors which bridge the gap between the original

<sup>2</sup> Professor G. W. Allport (*Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, New York, 1937) cites the results of an anonymous questionnaire which shows that three times as many girls as boys wished to be of the opposite sex.



and the later choice of love-objects. It explains, I think, the shifting of affection from the same to the opposite sex. The fantastic figure of oneself in the girl's rôle evolves into the imaginary figure of an ideal girl who is loved. The transition is comparable to that which leads from a rehearsal in which an actor has to perform the rôle of another who is absent, besides his own, to the real performance, in which the two rôles are played by two actors.

I have not concealed the fact that the theory here presented is a first attempt to solve the problem. It has the incompleteness and shortcomings of such an approach. Many observations and experiences in analytical practice seem to lead to a psychological reconstruction of this or a similar kind. The problem needs further elucidation and study. The phenomenon itself is far from being entirely understood. As evidence I can offer only my own experience, which seems to favor the theory of such a complementary ideal of the opposite sex and its rôle in the development of adolescent love.

This attempt is the best that so poor a man as Hamlet has to offer. Which reminds me that I have an authority at my disposal that I could call on: Shakespeare. In many of his comedies a person is dressed up as an individual of the other sex. Lovable Portia, witty Rosalind, cunning Jessica appear in male disguise. Whoever listens to their speeches will not doubt that this transformation is more than a disguise. These girls not only wish to appear to be men, they would like to be men. It is obvious that they play the man well because they have rehearsed the rôle many times in their imaginations. Pretending to be men fulfills, we would say, their ego-ideal in terms of the opposite sex; it allows them to act out what they dreamed they would be like and how they would conduct themselves if they were men. That is the concealed or unconscious meaning of the disguise. The other characters accept them as men and are deceived by their appearance and by their masculine speech and manners. They act the rôle with passion. But the end is always the same; they are re-transformed into girls who no longer resist their suitor and who sink into his arms. They react as if the performance of the rôle had exhausted the possibility of the imagination and as if they were now ready to accept the real man in place of the masculine ego-

ideal which was, before, represented by the disguise. This acting is the play of the grown-up girl who continues her fantasies for a short time in life. But such acting and thinking are only the bridge to the beloved man. He soon takes the place of the ego-ideal, and she cedes her assumed rôle to the real man.

Is not the transfer of the ego-ideal from self to a man obvious in such a playful disguise and in the confusions and mistakes which lead to the happy ending? Does there not appear as a comedy of errors in the Elizabethan plays what in the fantasy of many adolescents takes place as a thought-possibility? At the end a desired and desirable man enters the scene which was previously dominated by the idealized character of the daydreamer herself acting the part of a man. After the performance in disguise comes the real performance, but the parts of the performer on the thought-stage are reversed. The playful disguise of Shakespeare's figures and its significance in the love-play made me suspect that the poet unconsciously knew that the seeking of one's ideal through the fancied assumption of the rôle of the opposite sex has a secret mission in the reaching out for love. At the end the lady comes across this bridge, but only after she has convinced herself that the man deserves the place which her ego-ideal had before he appeared.



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## *The Day Before Yesterday*

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MANY THOUSANDS of books and articles have been written about the history of love. Anthropologists and historians, psychologists and philosophers and scientists of all nations have dealt with the subject exhaustively. The names of many of them are well known: Spencer, Westermarck, Havelock Ellis, Freud, Muller-Lyer, Lucka, van de Velde, and many others. We appreciate the merits of these scholars highly, but the value of their research is impaired by their concept of love. To the majority of them love is a part or a derivative of sex. They do not recognize that love is quite different from sex in origin and character and that it grew from separate roots.

The history of love is a special subject, which has to be treated independently from the history of sex until the two urges fuse. I shall make the difference clear by a comparison. The investigation of the history of sex is comparable to the research of a geologist who differentiates certain strata in the formation of a mountain and deduces from them the changes which took place in pre-historical time. Investigating the early history of love is like the work of an archaeologist who excavates the ruins of an old temple built from rocks quarried on a neighboring hill. The difference between these investigations is no mere difference in the age of the thing investigated. It is a difference in the nature of the subject, although both men deal with history. Research of the first kind is a part of natural science; research of the second kind is a part of the history of civilization. We know that the two subjects overlap at many points, but they are not the same. The

archaeologist often needs the help of the geologist, but their methods are as dissimilar as their subjects, and remain unlike, even though the two men co-operate occasionally.

Men existed on earth for ages, had sex-relationships, and lived their lives without love. The primitive man, supplied with food, shelter, and women as sex-objects, did not feel any urge to love. It was not a vital need, and he could live comfortably without being aware of such a thing as romance.

The history of love is, to a great extent, unknown to us. How did love come into the world? And why and when? What were its original forms, and under what circumstances did sex and love unite? We do not know the answers—no one knows—and your guess is as good as mine. What follows here is sheer conjecture, founded on circumstantial evidence from analytical experiences. It is an attempt at reconstruction, to which I attribute a certain degree of probability, neither more nor less. It seems to me that perhaps this reconstruction comes nearer to the real story than any other attempt I know of. After all, no apology is needed. It remains the privilege of some psychoanalysts to hide their lack of imagination behind a passion for evidence and proofs where obviously none can be secured. In the few attempts at reconstruction made by psychoanalysts, the history of love has the character of a bed-time or bed-timed story.

One thing is certain and indisputable: love is much younger than sex. Sex appeared early on this planet and is here to stay. Even if the origin of love could be traced back to a time many thousands of years before our own, it would still be much younger than sex. Sex has existed as long as men have breathed on earth. It is as old as the hills or the female body. Love appeared rather late. Even its first appearance was perhaps not connected with sex, but with other relationships. It was introduced much later into the relationship between the sexes. Not only did it have a different origin from sex, but it led a separate existence for a long time and had a different development. Sex existed before man learned to stand erect, before he made sound into speech or discovered fire. It was there when he went out for hunting and fighting; it accompanied him from the long animal-like phases of his life on-



wards. Love is not possible before a relatively high phase of development is reached. It is a product of civilization. Its appearance indicates that blind and violent drives have been partially controlled and transformed.

I think that affection was not begotten of the relationship between sexes, but that it was fused with sex later on. We conceived of love as the result of an emotional reaction against original envy, jealousy, and possessiveness, as an overcoming of hostile and greedy impulses. Such feelings between the sexes did not exist to any considerable extent in primitive society. They came into existence among members of the same sex. Between man and man there was rivalry, envy, and jealousy; there was admiration and an ambition to be like the other superior man. Even such an emotional situation became possible only after the process of differentiation had reached a certain level and after it was recognized that one person is not only unlike, but also superior or inferior to another. This ability to distinguish values is a late phase of civilization. Out of the conflict between aggressive and possessive tendencies and the counter-impulses affection could originate. Its first realm was thus not the meeting place of man and woman, but the spot where members of the same tribe or the same social group met—not the secret rendezvous of a couple, but the public meeting place of a half-civilized community.

After a long time, after many thousands of years, love was transferred from this original admiration of man for man to the realm of sexual relationship. Such a move became possible only when a tension arose between the sexes, when a contest made a solution necessary, and when women changed from instruments of sex-satisfaction to objects of envy and admiration. I propose, therefore, that the birthplace of love is not to be found near the primitive bedroom of a couple who had sexual relations, but at the places where primitive society had its combats, dances, and palavers. The first vague feelings of affection linked members of the same sex together as expression of the conquest of competitive, envious, and hostile impulses. These suggested developments correspond in general to those we observe in an individual, in whom the first affections appear between brothers and playmates who were rivals before they became friends.

But how did love enter into the relationship between the sexes? We do not know, but I am convinced that it was not there from the beginning. Here is my conjecture: woman was at first only a sexual object to and a co-worker with man.<sup>1</sup> Sexual intercourse was at first not very different from rape. The primitive man assaulted the woman ferociously and overpowered her. (The Flemish painter Felicien Rops depicted such a fight between a caveman and a female.) Slang expressions like "lady-killer," "wolf," and others remind us unconsciously of these primitive forms of love-making. Sex was originally accompanied by the aggressiveness, brutality, and coarseness of the male, was a violent conquest of the female who resisted with all her power. Women got rather a rough deal and were put on the defensive. It was a man's world. To be born a woman meant then a life of humble hardship.

We have no notion as to how and under what influences the character of sex-relations changed and softened, how they lost the element of force. No doubt this change signifies a revolution in the prehistoric development of man. It mitigated the brutal character of an act which was rather violent intrusion than intercourse, and in which physical relief was not accompanied by tenderness. What the woman felt was at first not considered. Biting was the kiss of this prehistoric phase. The aggressive act with the aim of sex-satisfaction, of the lessening of a physical tension, was not followed by any emotion. Something of the grimness and savagery of this animal-like intercourse is preserved to this day.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I do not consider here the phase of the matriarchate which perhaps preceded the male rule in society. We know of tribes today in which women are the dominant sex, and survivals of the ancient matriarchal order exist in many customs. Perhaps there was a time in primitive society generally when giant, Amazon-like women, promiscuous and maternal, governed primitive society. We do not know how this phase of female supremacy gave way to male rule. The long phase of mother-right in men's civilization, comparable to the early times of a little boy's life with mother, was perhaps followed by a time in which the battle of the sexes started with a rebellion of the male, who finally brought women under his rule.

<sup>2</sup> A young woman described her husband's behavior in the first months of married life as follows: "His manner of love-making was simply military, and my body was the parade-ground." The clumsiness and the lack of psychological understanding which many intelligent men show in their sexual approach are really astonishing. If I may use a simile, many men seem to feel that it is better to smash through a door than to open it. A patient complained about the forcefulness of her newlywed husband: "It is as if he wants to pack a suitcase." Most



Even now its character is near to that of a fierce and exhausting struggle. The French use the phrase *faire l'animal avec deux dos* for sexual intercourse.

Even after a fundamental change had taken place, sexual relationship was nothing but a gratification of the coarse sex-drive. It was not a personal relationship. After the release there must have been nothing but indifference towards the partner, no trace of tenderness. Neither the man nor the woman connected sex with companionship. A couple met and had sexual intercourse and separated. There was no other tie between the two. Their interests were different. They had nothing in common besides the physical sensation of a few minutes. The changes which brought about the decrease of violence in sex (we cannot even guess their nature) contributed nothing to the formation of an emotional companionship between the two sexes.

It seems obvious that this first change in the character of sexual relationship must have been made by women. By what means and under what circumstances women brought their men-folk so far that they renounced their violence and brutality in satisfying the sexual urge will remain unknown. It was certainly not a sudden change. It needed perhaps many centuries to modify the violence of the original masculine sexual approach, but it was a triumph of women. No longer did they need to be afraid of being hurt and wounded in sex relationships. It was the first step toward humanization of sex, many thousands of years ago. We must not forget that the savage in man is never quite eradicated. There is a survival of the primitive fear of male sexuality in women. This is an elementary reaction which is emphasized in the attitude of hysterical women. (Freud once said to me, "A woman who is not in the least hysterical is a cow.")

Even after this change there was no fundamental alteration in the relationship of the sexes. In the time of the mammoth and the big wolf the female had no great power over men. Perhaps man

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women feel that the sexual approach of men is too abrupt and isolated from their ordinary social behavior towards women. There are no, or too few, transitions from courting to sex, women think. Men's sex is, in the words of a patient, "so immediate. To expect that a man will wait until I am ready is asking for the moon."

was then ready to sell something for her, but certainly not his soul. Women became powerful only after men had begun to day-dream of them; for, after all, they are much more seductive in fantasies than in reality.



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## Yesterday

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THE SECOND revolution occurred with the entrance of love into sex-life or, as we would say today, with the birth of romance. It was an advance along the road of human civilization as important as the emancipation of slaves. We are as unable to date this great event as we are the first revolutionary development in sex-life which preceded it by many thousand years.<sup>1</sup> Can we guess how love—let us call it romance—advanced into the realm of sex? I freely confess that the hypothesis I shall present is based only on many insights gained in the psychoanalysis of men and women of our time and on the comparison of these results with the traces of a possible development which we can study in the contributions of historians of civilization and of ethnologists. I assume that this evolution was also brought about by women. They taught men to love as they earlier mitigated the savagery of masculine sex expression. I imagine that women were treated roughly, or at least indifferently, in everyday life; men preferred men's company; women were considered to be inferior and were appreciated only as sex-objects and assistants in work. Mankind had by this time established a patriarchal order and organization of the tribe. All psychological premises for romance were

<sup>1</sup> Emil Lucka (*Die drei Stufen der Erotik*), Denis de Rougemont (*Love in the Western World*, New York, 1941), and other writers (Andre Maurois, *Visages de l'amour*, New York, 1942) asserted that love originated in the time of the troubadours, between the eleventh and twelfth centuries after Christ, and that it was introduced by the worship of the Holy Virgin. Most of these authors consider love, of course, as a nobler, spiritualized form of sex-urge. I need not point out that the scholars who pretend to know the birthday of love in mankind's history confuse a culminating period in its development with its beginning. Such statements are as fantastic as if a historian of literature should assert that tragedy first appeared in Shakespeare's plays.

lacking; there was no emotional tension, no envy or jealousy, no need to conquer. Men were satisfied with the mere physical possession of women. Women were sexually used and then discarded. They did not have significance as persons but merely as sex-instruments. Sex-life had not changed or had changed as little as the development of the mammoth into the elephant. Only the intrusion of affection changed its character and enlarged its realm.

With love something new came into the world, comparable to the appearance of men among the primitive mammals. Some women must have rebelled against being considered mere chattels of men and must have thus created a situation which was favorable to the burgeoning of romance. A few women as leaders, or a group of women created, I think, an emotional atmosphere in their attitude to men which brought tension, envy, and reluctant admiration as a new element into the relationship between the sexes. At first only objects of sex-satisfaction—you could almost say, victims of the sexual urge of men—women changed the situation into one in which they were objects of longings, in which they were no longer only sexually desired but also courted. We can guess that their strongest motives must have been envy and hostility against men and their privileged situation. Women were subjected to men's sexual urges; they felt neither the same physical intensity of sex-need nor the same degree of sensual satisfaction. Some of them began competition with men by revolting against the contempt in which men held them and against the rough treatment to which they were subjected, if not in sexual intercourse, then during the day.

They began to hold out on their men. They no longer submitted indifferently and stupidly to the sensual wishes of the men, but withdrew themselves and denied their services. Men could beat them and force them until they had to yield. They had to give in, but they did not surrender. Men knew that women were no longer willing instruments they could play on, but that they resisted force and gave in to it reluctantly. Women were overpowered, but they remained stiff and unobliging. They gave in, but they never relaxed. They could be called to order, they might comply silently and stubbornly, but they did not respond. The women of a prehistoric era refused themselves to their husbands



and lovers if they felt badly treated. The ladies of our day have the same silent but crushing kind of repartée.

There were two ways open to the man for meeting this new situation: he could get by force the satisfaction he had begun to miss, or he could seek other women who were more willing to comply with his wishes. No doubt man tried both ways. They proved unsatisfactory in the long run, even when they alleviated his sexual urges for the moment. His fantasy began to be pre-occupied with the one woman who refused herself to him or who gave in only to his superior physical strength, to violence. Women discovered then the means and ways to occupy the imagination of men. They learned to attract and to withdraw so that the image of the one woman who refuses remains and proves stronger than the reality of other women who are willing. Men had to learn the hard way that they could get more with honey than with vinegar. But their road to love led uphill.

Woman had created a situation which had all the emotional potentialities for the birth of romance. There was tension, there was hostility and envy in the air. By refusing herself, she had discovered the prerequisite for creating longing on the part of man. He must have felt that he could regain her willingness and obedience, could overcome her reluctance and resistance, if he did what she wanted. The primitive man was in a desperate situation. He must have wondered, and had he expressed himself in our language, he might have asked, "What the hell does she want?" He was certainly not less slow-minded and insensitive than many men of our time. He was perhaps as furious and indignant and perplexed as many young husbands and lovers are in similar situations today. Ready to do what they are asked, they do not know what to do when they are not asked. They remain helpless because they are unfeeling or insensitive to unspoken wishes. No doubt primitive man tried in different clumsy ways to approach the reluctant woman. (Did not Balzac remark that a man expressing his passion is sometimes like an orang-utan trying to play a violin?)

There was, however, a way, clearly indicated by his desire to see his wife well-behaved again; he could be friendly with her and treat her better; he could woo and win her. By this process men

learned that they could fulfill their desires by other means besides fighting a person who resisted. They had learned to be affectionate with other men, to be companions instead of enemies. In overcoming their hostility and envy, they began to love the woman. Affection was born, tenderness appeared for the first time in the relationship between the sexes. Whenever women felt maltreated and humiliated later on, they refused to give themselves again; they used the only weapon they had; they withdrew from men. Under these circumstances a man had to reconcile the woman again, had to woo and to win her.

Refusal to surrender, except on her own terms, finally became an insurance to women against contempt and hostility, a guarantee that men would treat them well, would not scorn them and hurt their pride. To be loved, to be appreciated, to be admired and highly valued became, so to speak, the necessary premise for giving in to the sexual desires of the man. To refuse his solicitations until the man had learned to love her as a person became a main part of woman's tactics in the battle of the sexes. Here is the seed of the passionate emotion we observe today, the germ of what we call romance. I want to point out—most politely, most politely—that love, whether it is evil or good, is an invention of the ladies, not of men.

Women's rebellion against the contempt of men and against maltreatment by them created a new need in the male animal. There must have been an intuitive notion in women that men would appreciate them more highly and treat them more gently if sex relations could be made more difficult and more precious. Perhaps they had learned from the education of their children that occasional denials and refusals will bend the will of boys—and what are men but grown-up boys? Women instinctively realized that they must represent more than an object of sexual gratification and a working domestic animal if men were to value them differently and not forget their existence some minutes after sexual release. They envied and grudgingly admired the power men had over them, and they wanted to reverse the rôles, to make men envious and jealous.

Thus they created a tension, feelings of envy and greed and a desire for conquest, the necessary prerequisites for a new emo-



tional craving. The antagonism of men was thus roused by women who were courageous enough to risk everything to gain everything. They secured also, in their subtle manner, the means of overcoming negative feelings and of turning them into affection and tenderness. The men who had treated them contemptuously and indifferently until now were forced in a peaceful way to become lovers instead of sexually excited animals. We have no possibility of knowing how or when this revolution happened. We only know that it must have taken place during a certain phase of cultural development when women did not want to be mere objects of men's sex-urge and hostility. Echoes of such a female revolution against the tyranny of men are preserved in folklore, myths, fairy tales, and in numerous traces of a bitter contest and competition in prehistorical times—for example, Lysistrata, the Greek legends of Amazons, Brunhild and the Valkyries in German folklore, and so forth.

A revolt of women who wanted to be better valued and treated paved the way for affection and tenderness in the relationship of the sexes and finally created romance. In their desire to get even with men they introduced the element of tension into their dull intercourse with men who wanted only their bodies in periodical attacks of sexual excitement. Women felt that the attitude of men toward them had to change basically. They sensed that, in order to be honored, they must cease to be commonplace. To be recognized as extraordinary, they must cease to be ordinary. They had to become strangers at first to their men before they could hope that a new and emotional intimacy could replace male casualness and indifference toward them. They made their men feel what they themselves had felt: envy, greed, possessiveness, and a wish to own the object entirely.

This development could not have progressed as quickly and as smoothly as I have sketched it here. Perhaps this battle of the sexes lasted through many centuries, and no doubt the going was often heavy. The taming of the shrew was no easy task, especially as the taming of the male animal had previously to be achieved. There must have been blows and counter-blows, conflicts and retaliations, but women finally reached their goal. "*Ce que veut la femme, Dieu le veut,*" says the French proverb.

Women succeeded. Their willingness in sex became the reward for the friendliness and kindness which men had to demonstrate beforehand. Sexual satisfaction became the premium for fulfilling women's claims to the right of being loved. So long as they were at the mercy of men, neglected and looked down upon; so long as they were objects, not of longings, but of sexual wishes only, love was impossible.

Romance was originally introduced into the relationship between men and women, not as a result and consequence of sex, as psychoanalysts imagine, but in opposition to sex, as a hurdle which had to be taken before sexual gratification was granted.

There is no doubt that the entrance of love into sex-life had a miraculous effect on the history of mankind, as it has now on the life of any individual man. A new and intoxicating element had come to be associated with sex-satisfaction, an association which made sex experience deeper, richer, and nobler. It transcended everything men had known or felt before. When women began to share men's feelings, intercourse became not merely pleasure, but happiness which changed to bliss, when they both reached the point of climax together.

The willingness of women, their yielding to the sexual demands of men, was attained first, but their sexual and tender response was the next and the highest aim. The increasing importance of the responsiveness of women, the fact that men could make them return affection and even arouse sexual eagerness in them marked the last step of this development. Feminine sexual orgasm was perhaps a rare event in the early phases of sex relations. Even today the sexual response of the average girl in her first relation with a man is delayed.

Prevented by her inferiority-feeling from loving, but in want of love, woman had now awakened this new need in man. She had roused an unheard-of power out of her hurt pride and had changed the character of man's sexuality. She had kindled a fire in projecting her own concealed feelings on the man, but now sparks of the flame she had lighted set herself ablaze. It was as if a person had purposely set fire to the house of a neighbor and the veering wind had carried the sparks from the flaming building into his own home. Carried away by the awareness of being



not only sexually desired but even admired and loved, woman feels now the passion she awakened in her companion, and she melts on the fire she had kindled. Such was the miracle of the fusing of love and sex, a world-shaking event in the history of human development, but scarcely mentioned in any textbook of history or psychology.

I want to emphasize again that love originally conflicted with sex, which had a violent and possessive nature, while love wants consideration and tenderness. It is a pure triumph that these conflicting powers, the old and tyrannical one and the new and gentle one, could fuse and can now govern a realm which is much wider than the restricted domain of sex. Love is not aim-inhibited or arrested sex, but, on the contrary, is instrumental in inhibiting sex and its brutality. It is not an offspring of the sex-drive, but came into life as a rival of it, fighting it and finally uniting with it. Love banned the hostility connected with sex in primitive man, softened its aggressiveness and protected the woman. It is not sex transformed, but it did transform sex. It made the object of sensual pleasure a love-object as well as the object of the sexual wishes. Love is justifiably considered as an upstart in the family of instincts, as an outsider and intruder. It is, as a matter of fact, a product of civilization which worked as long as necessary in opposition against more primal instincts until it obtained a place among them.

I offer this hypothesis of the invasion of love into the relations of men and women with all reservations necessary in presenting a new theory, but I believe that it has a high degree of plausibility and probability. It raises many questions; for instance, did women feel love towards men before men did towards them? Does the suggested development imply that women are more capable of loving men than men of loving women? My answer is decidedly negative. In the emotional situation here sketched it was not love which determined the change, but the wish of women to be loved—which makes a world of difference. There was no "personal love" (as they say) in the relationship between the sexes at this phase. (Personal love is a pleonastic expression as if you would say, a dark-colored Negro. Love can only be personal.) Women did not like to be treated as indiscriminated sexual objects, as

pieces of flesh which could easily be replaced by other females. They do not like such treatment to this day. They want to be appreciated as individuals, as personalities who cannot be confused with or replaced by others.

So long as they felt they were humiliated and treated with contempt by men, they could not love. There was too much insecurity and too little self-confidence in them. How could they love these men who made them feel inferior? Before they could, they had to be reassured and made more secure. Being physically desired by the excited man could not bring them this feeling of security. So long as they were only sex-objects, to be used like the next woman, not to be differentiated from the other woman and individually mistreated, they could not love themselves. Then women created, not by ruse, but by following their deeper tendencies, the tension and antagonism in men which first breeds greed, admiration, hostility, and finally the wish to be like the other.

All the prerequisites for love already existed in woman's soul. Everything was psychologically prepared, but women did not love men. They had to be loved first. People say that there is a great difference in the emotional life of the sexes, that in men desire begets love and that in women love begets desire. We realize now how much error is mixed with truth in such a psychological statement. Simple desire does not beget love in men, but unfulfilled desire, accompanied by feelings of jealousy and hostility. Love does not beget desire in women, but the certainty of being loved and wooed. Women did not love men, but they created passion in them, and it came home to themselves. They threw a weapon at men, and it turned into a boomerang which hit themselves. The original wish of women was not to love, but to be loved. And love, once aroused in men, functioned as a good protection against their hostility toward and neglect of women. At the same time it tended to preserve constancy and to oppose the instability of men (who says "*La donna e mobile?*" The gentleman is much more so) against the danger of being thrown over, of being ejected and maltreated. It is an insufficient and unreliable preservative, but it functions for a time.

The woman of today is not unlike the prehistoric woman in this regard. They are sisters under the skin. Has the situation



radically changed? Indeed not. Today, as many thousands of years ago, women want to be loved before they surrender. Caution towards the man makes restraint and retardation necessary. A woman said about the stormy courting of young men: "If things get too quick, I get frightened." There is an old fear in them, supported by a feminine tradition, which has survived throughout countless generations, that men might treat them contemptuously and throw them aside after they have had "their way" with them. Women today, as then, want to be reassured against such a risk. It is in their interest to preserve romance and to delay surrender until they obtain the guarantee of being cared for. The fear of becoming unwanted haunts most women at one time or another. ("After a while he will not love me any more.") I shall not easily forget how a young girl, who felt endangered by the wooing of an attractive man, adjured me in an analytical hour: "Do not let me fall in love with him. Please don't, until I am absolutely sure that he loves me!" Thus speaks one of the oldest fears of women.

My suggestion as to how romance came into the world is less fanciful than it may appear at first sight. This is not a just-so story. My conjecture is founded on the compression of many hundreds of stories told by men and women in analytical sessions, stories which cannot be retold here. Many women have expressed their fears and hopes, their misery and happiness in these hours and have reported their defeats and victories. And many men have told me about their conflicts and their oscillation between their sexual desires and affection, the kinds of attraction they felt towards different women. Often I have had the opportunity to observe the evolution from sexual desire to romantic love, and the subtle ways of the ladies who brought about emotional changes of the described nature, or who failed to do so.

I just now happened to recall a young lady who once put the surprising question to me: "Do men feel anything at all?" Of course, she meant to ask whether men feel anything else but the crude sexual urge, whether they have affectionate emotions before, during, and after sexual intercourse. Such criticism of man's unloving attitude must once have impelled the rebellion of women. They were not sentimental or romantic themselves. They wanted

men to be so, and they succeeded to a great extent with the young men, who are no realists at all. Women inserted the idea of love, the most important element of sexual relationships, into the minds of men, or rather they introduced the idea of being loved. They must have had an unconscious notion that this desire to love was originally foreign to men, that it has to be brought to them from outside. Men are now familiar with love, but it remains an imported article.

Clever and sincere women sometimes express their astonishment over the exaggerated sense of romance, very remote from reality, which many men show. They wonder why men in loving them have to put them on top of a pedestal, which is an uncomfortable place to be. Perhaps they guess that such an idealization is necessary to men because their illusions are so easily disturbed. One of these clever women, Madame de Girardin, once said, "Love with men is not a sentiment, but an idea." The most clever of the women, it is true, do not say anything. They keep silent on the subject.

It is likely that the revolution in sex life which is marked by the influx of tenderness and affection was started by a select group of women and then spread to others. I do not think it was an organized effort, but a private enterprise. Perhaps at first only a small group of men felt the change and reluctantly admitted that there was a new power which reigned not less mightily because it reigned gently. After some time every one of this group must have thought himself in possession of a delightful secret none of the other men knew—just like every young man who falls in love today.

There is no doubt that being loved brought to women later on other material and emotional advantages. Women cashed in on the romanticism of men. They tried to keep up the illusion men had about them. Here is the birthday of chivalry and courtship. The first and main function of the new power was protection from male neglect, inconsiderateness, and hostility. Being loved gave women a new dignity and security, awakened new forces in them, and made them more beautiful and lovable, just as it does today.

My guess is that human sexual relations remained for a long



time, probably for many hundred thousand years, untouched by tenderness or affection. In the best couples a slow process of mutual adaptation and adjustment took place and resulted in a vague attachment nobody would call romance. The assumption expressed by some psychologists, namely, that the sexual satisfaction men got from women resulted first in gratefulness to women and finally in love for them, is fantastic. There is no need to argue the point. Everyday observation of life contradicts this theory very plainly.

Romance in our sense was for ages foreign to man. If we can trust good observers of half-civilized tribes, and missionaries who have spent many years in the Far East, it is even now unknown to a great part of mankind. Even in the late ancient times, of which we have knowledge, romance as differentiated from sexual desire, the appreciation of a woman as a love-object, must have been an unusual phenomenon. There is a similar situation now in the lowest layers of society in which men consider women only as sexual objects and in which the relationship between the sexes is characterized only by crudely selfish and sensual interests.

I hope I have made clear in this chapter that love was originally opposed to sex, that it emerged as a counter-power to it, and that their conflict resulted later in the glorious reconciliation and amalgamation of the two enemies.

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## *Letter of Criticism*

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I FRANKLY admitted that the history of love sketched in the previous chapters is pure conjecture and open to all kinds of criticism. Important factors which are unknown to us were perhaps instrumental in the development of romance; powers which were perhaps overlooked may have influenced it and determined its course. If and when they can be discovered, I shall be the first to acknowledge their influence.

A young lady of my acquaintance who read this part of the manuscript wrote me a letter of criticism which is deserving of serious consideration. She calls the sketch of history here presented a "tour de force" because I did not consider that sex and love have to do with the production of infants. I quote from her letter:

"... never once do you mention the fact that nine months later the woman has on her hands a pink and squalling worm which must be fed and kept warm and its diapers changed many times a day and which eventually must be raised and taught to fend for itself.

"Perhaps, among the savages of whom you speak, where food can be obtained by shaking a tree or in places where people can catch fish for their next meal, there is no need to worry so much. But as soon as you get into the cold and uncomfortable climates where love was invented, you worry. Even with a lot of money and all the comforts of the city, it is no easy task to raise a bunch of kids single-handed. Nor, we are told, do you raise them as well as when it was a joint venture. After all, reproduction does not end with copulation. It does not end in childbed either.



"The habits of many birds confirm what I am trying to say. They do not simply come together and drop their eggs carelessly on the ground. They go through elaborate courting procedures and they make nests. The male bird tends to the female while she is hatching their young, and they are really quite sweet about it. And they stay together until the young are grown and kicked out; then each goes his own way. Perhaps I too am carried away by an analogy, but if there is any basic difference between this and human love, what is it? In other words, my theory of where this love thing originates is more or less as follows: the more complicated the business of raising one's young, the more nearly can be found the perfection of love. Sex, as you so rightly say, takes care of getting the sperm into the ovum and not much more, but love takes care of the forming of men and women, of the reproduction of the species. By this method we girls get ourselves good providers and proper fathers for our children. As the girl said when asked where people would be without love: 'Scarce!'"

These remarks, equally charming because of their spontaneity and feminine realism, are all the more deserving of consideration because the young lady wrote without any thought that her views would be published. They are, however, typical of a kind of rational argumentation which does not consider the unconscious processes. The analogy of the birds which jointly hatch their young and are "really quite sweet about it" should be put aside. There is certainly a basic difference between this and human romance.

Nevertheless, a part of the writer's criticism is justified because production of children is not considered in my sketch. It is certainly true that thoughts concerning offspring can play a conscious part in the choice of the masculine partner and in later phases of love, but these considerations should not be confused with the genesis of romance. It cannot be denied that the raising of a child ties a young couple together, but it does not mark the origin of tenderness. Nothing in the behavior of man shows a heightened love or intensified sexual desire for the pregnant woman; rather the contrary is true. Pregnant women, on the other hand, feel an increasing affection for the father of the child, and it is noteworthy that they show an increased wish for sexual in-

tercourse. It cannot be decided whether the change is determined by a stronger organic need, by more affection for the man, or by a conscious effort to make him forget the transformations which impair her bodily attraction at this time.

It is, however, very doubtful that anticipation of a baby born of a particular woman can awaken love and sexual desire in a man. I am afraid that the desire for fatherhood is not very well developed in young men. My impressions from many years of psychoanalysis tend to make me believe that even with women the desire to have a baby does not at first go beyond a vague kind of longing. It seems to me that my correspondent has placed the cart before the horse, that women desire a baby by the man they love, rather than deliberately selecting a father for a wished-for child.

It is good to be admonished that the history of sex and love is more complicated than it appears in the hypothetical reconstruction I have presented. There are certainly rational factors at work in the development of romance, but their importance cannot match the power of the drives which determine the emotions of young people. Mothers tell their sons and more often their daughters that the best choice of a mate is a mixture of romance and realism, but wisdom is not transmissible. If only we could will our experience to our children! But the poet is right:

What I have learned, down my grave it will go,  
None can to none be an heir here below.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Was ich gewonnen gräbt mit mir man ein  
keiner kann keinem ein Erbe hier sein.*

—Richard Beer-Hofman, *Schlaflied für Miriam* (1897).



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## *The Unconscious Meaning of a Cartoon*

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AT THIS point I should proceed in drawing the arch from pre-historical times to the present, to contrast the needs of the cave-man with the man in our civilization. I would have to demonstrate that the old powers of the sex-drive and of the wish for domination continued to aim for immediate satisfaction when the new need of being loved appeared; I would have to show how much of the old situation still exists, side by side with the changes which create new urges.

At the right moment a cartoon which *The New Yorker* published has fallen into my hands. It fulfills the task much more efficiently than I could. The cartoon pictures a few Europeans, apparently Britishers, who are in or near a jungle. A big orangutan has seized one of the women and is carrying her away into the forest. The two gentlemen and the other woman sitting before the hut seem not to be disturbed. The caption says, "Personally, I can't imagine what he sees in her." Who speaks here? Certainly not either of the two men who have their whisky glasses in their hands. It is the woman who makes this remark, which we recognize as one commonly made by women about men's choices of mates.

Where is the humor of the cartoon? It is clear that it must be in the contrast between the horrible event and the commonplace, casual remark. No doubt humor also arises from the contrast between the horrible spectacle and the comic imperturbability of the spectator. We come nearer to understanding the essence of this comical power if we remember what Freud discovered about the psychological nature of humor. The pleasure from humor originates, Freud asserts, from the saving of emotional effort.

The cartoon brings us face to face with a terrifying situation. We expect that the three people in the picture will react with horror, grief, panic, or despair and that they will do something to prevent the abduction. We are ready to share these emotions, but this readiness is superfluous the moment we read the conventional remark which accompanies the picture. We were all ready to develop the emotion of alarm which the situation arouses in us, but we suddenly relax because it seems to have lost the quality of terror as a result of the remark of the lady. Her words, as well as her attitude and that of her two companions, seem to say, "There is nothing horrible in what we and you witness. It is nothing dangerous. Do not be alarmed. It is an everyday event." The pleasure we draw from such sparing of intense emotions expresses itself in a tendency to laugh or at least to smile. It is important for the effect of humor that this change from a readiness to participate in highly unpleasant emotions to relaxation should be sudden.<sup>1</sup>

We understand now much better what makes a good part of the comical character of the cartoon, but there remains another and perhaps better part of it unexplained. There is more in the cartoon than meets the eye. We sense an unconscious meaning. The contrast between what happens and the undisturbed attitude of the onlookers conceals this secret meaning. What is it? Change the situation only a little, assume that a huge Malayan tiger abducts the woman instead of an orang-utan. Immediately the development of humor has become almost impossible. But if that is so, it is essential that the animal be one of the big baboons, a beast which resembles a man.

Suddenly the hidden meaning of the cartoon reveals itself. The figure of the orang-utan is only a substitute for that of an uninhibited, coarse, wild man, a creature of the cave man type.

<sup>1</sup> Freud overlooked this essential character of suddenness for the comical effect. I discovered it in 1929 and discussed its psychological importance in two books, *Lust und Leid im Witz* (1929) and *Nachdenkliche Heiterkeit* (1933). The psychical effect is determined by the transformation of initial fright as felt in the face of a danger into the freeing feeling that there is no cause for panic at all. This change takes place within a few seconds. I believe that the facial expression of laughter is originally the result of such sudden relaxation after anxious suspense. The attention with which we face a possibility of danger gives way to relaxation, and this sudden change reflects itself in our muscles. Anna Freud showed that children who were freed from anxiety react with laughter.



What the lady says concerns really an everyday event, that of a man eloping with a girl. When we turn the stone to look at what is below it, we discover that the situation is really not dangerous: a passionate fellow ran off with a woman. The sentence of the lady and the inactivity of the two men then take on a new meaning, or rather our changed view of the situation gives them their real meaning. The men look at the event as something which happens every day, and the lady too. She reacts in a typical feminine way. She wonders what in this particular woman roused such a passion in the man. She does not imagine which qualities, which physical or mental excellences, make the man fall in love so passionately just with this woman in whom she cannot see anything extraordinary. The fact that the artist draws, not a man, but an orang-utan as the abductor gives the answer to her question. Not love, but a blind sexual desire impels the man to act.

Another contrast, not in the cartoon but in the caption, now becomes clear. Women wonder so often about this strange creature, the male animal. They assume that his choice of a woman is dictated by her personal superiority. But men frequently choose, not women with a special personality appeal, but those with strong sex appeal. If the lady does not understand what a man sees in some other woman, she fails to recognize the ferocity and exclusive power of sex desire in men, who so often do not want any particular woman, but merely a female.<sup>2</sup> The two male companions of the lady do not wonder; they understand much better what drove the man to the abduction.

Behind the humor of the cartoon is a serious psychological problem separated from the joke by only a thin membrane. The difference of outlook between men and women lies in the choice of an object. Is that all which the psychoanalytical interpretation of the cartoon reveals? Certainly not. It is of more than superficial significance that the scene is placed on the fringes of civilization, where houses stand quite near to the jungle, where urbanized conventions may be sharply contrasted with the savagery of a region in which only the law of nature reigns. There is also mean-

<sup>2</sup> Many cartoons show woman as a critic of this male attitude. I remember a cartoon which the Berlin *Simplicissimus* brought out about twenty years ago. A lady says to the man who sits across the table from her at a dinner party, "If you love me, please tell me so, but don't make my stockings dirty."

ing in the contrast of the savage action of this ape man and the imperturbable attitude of the two gentlemen.

We understand that the whole situation, the scenery which shows civilization and jungle so near to each other, will only indicate how near they generally are. The big, savage orang-utan and the two civilized Englishmen are not separated by an impassable gulf. The cave man with his crude and savage needs lives also in them as he lives in every man. In other words, the cartoon shows that the blind sex drive, the indiscriminating sexual desire, is also more powerful today than reason and tenderness, which should dictate the choice of an object. Occasionally, as in our cartoon, this drive breaks through all the fences which civilization has built and reveals itself in all its crudeness and savageness. The voice of the woman represents another, some would say higher, level of civilization, which rejects the demands of the indiscriminate sex urge. Personally she cannot imagine what this man sees in the woman he abducts; that is, she cannot imagine that his only interest in the victim is the fact that she is female. The demands of civilization and of nature are here contrasted. They fight each other also in the culture pattern of our present. The orang-utan in the cartoon is only a substitute for the prehistoric ape man who is driven by the crude needs of his nature, but this primitive man continues his existence in our civilization. He is concealed in me and in you.

The cartoon is illuminating because of the contrasts it shows in our present civilization, in which men still feel the crude and uninhibited sex-urge as well as the demands for affection. Every picture tells a story, but not every picture knows the story it tells.



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## *Tomorrow*

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SHOULD WE TAKE space to try to get a glimpse of the future of romance, of things to come? The nature of the subject will restrict us to a few paragraphs. I cannot offer a vision of the future—we can hardly foresee the extent of the sweeping changes just before us—but perhaps it is possible to interpret the signs of the past and present and predict the direction which development will take in the following centuries. I offer a few ideas for what they may be worth. We are concerned more with the question of psychical potentialities than of material realities, more with the essence behind ever-changing facts, the hidden law, than with the facts themselves.

Scholars who follow the history of civilization sometimes observe that mankind is very young and that we can expect great achievements from it as it grows older. Mankind is still in its early adolescence and is not yet near to manhood. Perhaps it would be better to say it is immature instead of young. The bitter crises and conflicts of our time are, so to speak, the growing pains of the species.

We think that the third thousandth year of the Christian era will bring at least a clarification, if not a solution, of many problems of sex and love. The year three thousand nine hundred will, we hope, see decided progress in subduing the tension between the sexes, the removal of a great deal of envy and possessiveness, and will usher in a new education of both sexes for companionship. After psychoanalysis has destroyed to a great extent the general hypocrisy about the sexual needs of men and women, the task of uniting the demands of sex and the need for love will still

remain. We can foresee that the smokescreen which society has produced, the pretense that sex and love coincide, will evaporate and that the abyss between the two needs will become clear.

I think that slowly but surely the general make-believe that sexual objects are at the same time and automatically love-objects will in the far future become truth by following strange yet unforeseen ways and detours. The union of sex and love will not only be an emotional reality, as it often is now, but will also become a psychological necessity. In an increasing measure people will desire to seek sexual satisfaction only with objects who are also loved. Only such intercourse will then grant full satisfaction. Even now it has become difficult for cultured men to touch a woman without some element of genuine affection. Of course I do not predict that the battle of the sexes will be ended in a few hundred years, that no hostility, envy, and greed will be felt on either side. Perhaps it will only be an armistice, not peace; perhaps the expression of these aggressive and possessive tendencies will only be more humane.

Is it utopian to expect that the fusing of the needs of sex and love will be a psychological necessity for the citizens of the year 3800 or 3900? This is the only direction in which emotional development can turn. There is no chance of traveling in the other direction. There will be a growing distaste against indiscriminate sexual relations. Sex without affection will be as distasteful to men as it now is to women. Increasing insight into the need for uniting sexual and tender wants will help this development. Such a prediction may sound fantastic at this moment, but it certainly would have sounded as fantastic if anyone had told our tribal ancestors ten thousand years ago that they would feel a distaste at the thought of eating human flesh, which was a very delicious morsel to them. Disgust at cannibalism is as natural to us now as was the appetite for human flesh to these man-eaters.

One thing is certain. Woman will contribute considerably to this future development. She can claim the credit for introducing the new element of romance into the relationship of the sexes. This need, once awakened, is not easily satisfied. Women will remain the emotional educators of mankind in the realm of sex as they are for every individual man. The potentials of love are



not exhausted with romance. It is only love's most conspicuous expression, but certainly not its most important one.

The miracle can become more miraculous. It can increase, expand and extend beyond the realm of sexual relationship. It can express its warmth and humanity toward other social groups. It might at last soften and, after thousands of years, mitigate the wild ambitions of men and moderate their furious rivalries. Perhaps a little part of the task which the poet attributed to woman in the beyond can be performed by them on this earth:

Here the ineffable  
Wrought it with love.  
The Eternal-Womanly  
Draws us above.

To predict an increasing fusion of love and sex in the next thousand years is not as risky as might appear. It would be more dangerous to foretell what the vicissitudes of love and sex will be after this time in the remotest future. Sex is here to stay, but what about romance? A Gaelic proverb asserts that everything will perish but love and music. I am not sure. Why should these two be exempted from the law which determines growth and decay? As a matter of fact, I am rather skeptical. There was a time in which love did not exist here below; and there may come another time when it will disappear from the earth. New needs we cannot foresee may emerge, and new means may be found to fulfill them.

THIRD PART

LOVE AND LUST



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## *A New Theory of Drives*

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LET US RETURN to our newly married couple, John and Jane. We tried to find which needs are satisfied in their relationship. It would be useless to ask John and Jane. They are not analytically inclined. They experienced their union and they do not feel any need to examine its sources. What are the essential ingredients of the happiness and pleasure they find in each other? The scientific answer would be that their ego-drives are as satisfied in their union as are their sexual needs. I have tried to demonstrate what the original natures of the sex-drive and of the primitive ego-drives are and to trace their later developments, among which love appeared to us as the most important. The situation of John and Jane satisfies all these needs at the same time. The proportion of the components is, of course, different in every individual, but these quantities which, it is true, determine the quality are of interest only for the psychological analyst. Our couple is happy because in their togetherness they have fulfilled the demands of their individual egos and at the same time have gratified their sexual wishes. We have gotten an adequate notion of how the mixture was compounded. Wherever we trace the sources of John's and Jane's happiness, we always find the satisfaction of instinctive needs. The emotions which the two people feel are only the psychical representatives of these primitive drives.

At this point we reach the borderline of investigation because an inquiry into the nature of instincts can be the subject of psychology only to a certain degree. It is primarily the task of another science, biology. Perhaps it would be wise to stop at this borderline, but it would not be very courageous. Discretion may

be the better part of valor, but there are certain situations in which you are forced to choose the worse part. If we are to gain a better understanding, a crossing of this borderline is unavoidable. I am very much aware of my incompetence in this field and of the amateurish character of my undertaking. The tentative and conjectural nature of the theory I am going to present is frankly admitted and so are the gaps I cannot fill, the uncertainties and dark spots. The only excuse for my transgression is that no other biological or psychological theory I know of satisfies me.<sup>1</sup>

The best approach to the new theory is perhaps a sketch of the history of the instincts. When the world was young and organic life had just been born, only instincts of self-preservation existed. Their goal is defined by their name. They drive the individual to satisfy his most vital needs. Whenever and wherever these primitive drives meet hindrances in their search for satisfaction, a violent effort is made to overcome the obstacle. Thus the will to conquer and to dominate, the urges to absorb, to possess and to destroy are descendants of the self-preserving instincts and became their companions in the struggle of life.

These primitive instincts already existed when a new urge rose to power—the sex-drive. It could not be as old as they are, because the differentiation into the two sexes is, as biology shows, of a later date. What is the aim of this new instinct? The answer is, of course, reproduction, continuation of the species. There exists, however, a justifiable doubt concerning this answer. Reproduction can be secured without any sexual impulse, even without sexual differentiation. The lowest organisms, the protozoa, consisting of a single cell and living in ocean beds and stagnant water, reproduce by fission. The sex act does not exist for them. They divide or split into two parts, each of which grows into a complete unit. This is the way of reproduction with the protozoa. A Puritan would say that they are immortal without being immoral. But if

<sup>1</sup> The aims of the following hypothesis are much more modest than those of Freud's theory of the instincts (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, New York, 1924) which differentiates the primeval Death-and-Life Instinct (or Eros). My attempt deals only with the powers which govern the life of the organic world. Independent of the admirable theory of Freud, my thesis starts from a different concept of the nature of the instincts. While it is actually necessitated by the need of better understanding, it may represent the first contribution of neo-psychoanalysis to biology.



the aim of the sex-drive is not reproduction, what is it? The new biology has an answer—variation. The purpose is the creation of different individuals, of new combinations produced by the union of a female and a male. Not reproduction, but production of new and many varieties of the species is the goal of the sex-instinct.

Has the sex-drive itself undergone development? Probably it has not, except in the fluctuations of its intensity, in its rise and fall. The other changes we have observed are not due to new aims but to the fusion of this drive with different ego-drives. The sex-urge itself seems unchangeable. It has a single purpose—release from a specific physical tension. But does not psychoanalysis speak of vicissitudes of sexual urges like repression, turning towards one's own person, and so forth? In our concept none of these vicissitudes are, strictly speaking, those of the crude sex-drive. As an instinct which is originally objectless it has as much or as little development as hunger or the need of excretion. The only other destiny it could have, besides satisfaction, is that it can be controlled for a certain time, that its gratification can be postponed. All other developments are determined by its co-operation with the ego-drives.

Have the ego-drives undergone development? These instincts aimed at first at keeping the individual alive. They were not aggressive; they were merely without regard for other individuals. They developed into aggressive and possessive urges in the fight with a hostile environment. They did not abandon their old goals, but they were often arrested and halted at stations which later became goals themselves. The offspring of these later drives, such as ambition, the wish to be liked, the impulses of rivalry, the need for social recognition, and others, bear only remote resemblance to their ancestors, the primitive ego-drives. The spirit of conquest lives in them all, even in their youngest descendant, love, which originates in an overcoming of envy, hate, and greediness. They all have traces of their ancestry. They carry with them slag from the dark earth from which they sprang. They are partly continuations of the elementary ego-drives, partly reaction-formations to them in the sense that diplomatic relations between nations are a continuation of fights between them. Secretly belligerent and aggressive, these younger drives try to reach their goal by way of

peaceful penetration, not by force and ferocity. If it were not for terrible and vicious relapses into barbarity, you would consider men quite a gifted species. The energy of the ego-drives works in the effort to reach the protective shelter of a cave as well as in the building of pyramids and churches; it works in the overcoming of the most elementary hindrances in the struggle of life as well as in the most impressive achievements of men. No other animal has developed such a transformation of impulses from immediate to very remote goals.

I have already discussed the two vicissitudes of the ego-drives which are the most important transformations for civilization—sublimation and love. At a certain point the conquering, selfish, and aggressive drives of the ego can be turned from their primal aims as if the course of a stream were to be altered for the purpose of irrigating a garden. At a later point in the development an even more astonishing change can take place, a full transformation of the conquering, jealous, and possessive drives into their opposite. We call this reversal love. Both processes, sublimation and the turning to tenderness, have the common characteristic that in them the immediate ego-interest seems to be put aside. In pursuing new aims the self is, so to speak, forgotten. At the time the ego finds its highest fulfillment in just these achievements. In both developments the ferocious beasts seem to have disavowed their character and become tamed. They show themselves willing to acknowledge a new government.

These late ego-developments can be made clearer by an example. Two brothers leave their native country and emigrate to a new one. They acquire there a new culture very different from their own and of a much higher kind. After some years the fact that they were born and raised in the old country can scarcely be discerned. The higher culture has marked them, has changed their habits and tastes. Only in certain emotional situations does their old temperament break through. Certain little traits remain as remnants of a forgotten past. In this sense the savage ego-drives appear almost unrecognizable in their new forms of sublimation and love. From the wild will of conquest and destruction came the effort to create beauty, civilization, and the noble passion of romance. We do not forget that under certain psychological con-



ditions a new reversal, a return to the submerged original, can take place. Just as the achievements of culture can be used for war and destruction, love can revert to envy and possessiveness. The accomplishments of sublimation can thus be again forged into weapons to hit other men. Civilization has enabled men to become more beastly than any beast.

After this outline of the development of instincts we dare to characterize their general nature. The psychological side of an instinct presents itself to observation as a pull toward something. There is, however, also a push away from something, which is perhaps the more important aspect.<sup>2</sup> There is less of a drive in the direction of a certain aim than a need to get rid of a certain tension. This tension is produced when an organic need of the individual is not satisfied. When a person does not get enough air to breathe, the tension takes the character of anxiety; when he lacks food, it is felt as hunger. Seen from this point of view, an instinct can be psychologically defined as an imperative drive to get rid of tension of a specific kind. The aim of the instinct is the disappearance, or at least the decrease, of this tension. The easing of it is felt as relaxation; its removal, as release and satisfaction. Tension is generally felt as unpleasant, while relaxation is pleasurable. This rule, however, has important exceptions which warn us not to oversimplify the emotional situation.

The preceding part of this theory, it seems to me, is to a great extent verifiable. What follows has more the character of speculation. It can be introduced by the picture of the part instincts now play in life. Tension and relaxation succeed each other with the regularity of inhaling and exhaling, of ebb and flow; that is the law of nature. The pendulum oscillates first to one side, then to the other until the last swing when the clock stops ticking. There is certainly a rhythm in this succession, but there seems to be no reason for the rhythm. It is as if a person should kindle a fire and then put it out. It would make sense if there were two persons, or, in our case, two powers, one which creates tension and the other which extinguishes it. The operation of two such forces playing against each other would explain much; if a fire were

<sup>2</sup> The German expression *Trieb*, similar to drive, emphasizes this trend, but its connotation also includes the push away.

allowed to burn without any attempt to extinguish it, its fury would destroy the house. If there were no fire, the people in the house would perish from cold. In other words, if the aggressive, possessive, and sexual impulses had totalitarian power, they would tend to exterminate all living beings. If there were no stimuli to arouse sexual and possessive impulses, life would come to a standstill; the end of either supposition would be annihilation. The continuation of life is secured by the fight and the interplay, by the independent operation and the co-operation of these two forces.

The two principles governing organic life have different aims, one toward the creation of tension, the other toward relaxation. There has been a battle on between these two great antagonists ever since life began on this planet. What are their biological goals? The one represents development; the other, constancy. The one creates diversity and varieties, produces differences; the other tries to annul them and insists on repetition, on reproduction of the same. The one wants modification and dissimilarity; the other, uniformity and homogeneity. The one tendency is directed toward the production of dissimilar individuals; the other, toward reproduction of facsimiles, of indistinguishable copies. These opposing tendencies can be generally characterized as progressive and conservative, or as principles of identity and of variation. The progressive principle by creating differences enlarges and enriches life. The conservative principle by insisting on repetition and sameness tries to undo the efforts of its opponent; it works as a preserving and leveling force.

The struggle of these opposite principles, their compromises and occasional fusions determine the process of life. Most of its phenomena which we observe are mixed formations produced by both primal principles. Very often, when one tendency almost reaches its goal, the other interferes to prove its own efficiency. Rise and fall of tension, the emergence and disappearance of urgent needs, unrest and calmness, mark this succession. The impression received is similar to that of two powerful waves which come from opposite directions and meet at a certain point.

The instincts are in the service of these two organic principles and are executives of both forces. Their task of serving two masters is difficult enough. They try to perform it in obeying first



the one and then the other. They fulfill their duty to the tendency which stimulates, stirs up, rouses tension and creates differences, and to the other, which relaxes and restores the calmness which levels and equalizes. The effect of such activity is that the goals of these principles can never be entirely reached in the end; their efforts are always frustrated. The instincts produce an organic need and put an end to it in gratifying it. They set up a stimulus and remove it by its specific gratification. They introduce differences and level them in the relaxation of the tension.

We follow the way from the primitive drives of self-preservation to the efforts which represent the highest achievements of mankind. The instincts which guard the individual secure and protect his life as an independent being. They overcome the tension set up by the most vital needs of breathing, of eating, of excretion. The aggressive drives master the difficulties originated in the resistance which the world sets up against the wishes of the individual. The sex-instincts try to level the specific tension of sexual desire.

Equally clear is the function of the instincts in bridging the social gulfs. The possessive and aggressive drives try to overcome the differences between individuals by subduing or destroying them. The sex-drive is instrumental in bridging the abyss between the sexes, in drawing the female and the male near to each other in spite of their dissimilarities. ("Three cheers for the little differences!") Love is an attempt to merge an I and a You, to equalize the tension between two personalities. The social tendencies, so intimately related to love and perhaps its heir in the future, strive to overcome the differences of groups, nations, creeds, and classes.

The aim of all the instinctive drives in the one direction is sameness, identity. There is no possibility of reaching it, only of approaching it. The efforts of the two principles result usually in compromises—a certain sameness in the variation, a certain differentiation in maintaining a pattern. There is a slow development interrupted by relapses and reactionary movements.

Why have we taken so much trouble to find out the nature of instincts and their psychological representatives, the drives? Because we live by them. This reason explains also the insertion of

this hypothesis, which will have no influence upon the presentation of my theory. Perhaps it is useful to turn a searchlight on the whole region of which the problems of sex and love are but a small part.

We now turn our attention from the fascinating spectacle of instinctual life to the narrower field in which the ego-drives, among them the youngest, love, co-operate and conflict with the sex-urge. Of the numerous problems in this realm, only a few will be discussed here. For several reasons we shall restrict ourselves to a small segment of this circle of problems. Our appetite for food of thought may be great, but we must take heed not to bite off more than we can chew.



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## *Battlefront*

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A PERSON who stumbles almost always looks around to see what made him trip. It is an all but automatic movement. I am in a similar situation, being aware just how I have failed in the preceding chapter to give an appropriate idea of the great part which the will to conquer and the lust for domination play in love and sex. I prefer the phrase "will to conquer" to similar ones, not only because it has a more dynamic connotation, but also because it can be used in both the sexual and possessive sense. It signifies the wish to own the person rather than to subject her or to make her feel one's power. This need renews itself whenever the object appears remote or outside one's sphere of influence. It is due to this revival as much as to the sexual urge that the object becomes again desirable after possession. Sometimes conquest takes on the character of a test of one's own power over the reluctant or hesitant woman.

It happens frequently in science and life that what appeared as a mystery is only a muddle. Such a situation was created by psychoanalysis which failed to differentiate what should have been separated in the general term of sex. It is necessary to unscramble the confusion.

I have tried to demonstrate already, in a transvaluation of most values of the psychoanalytical libido theory, that there are no such things as components of the sex-urge. What Freud and his followers present as such, like sadism, masochism, exhibitionism, and so on, are mixtures of the sex-urge, with drives from the ego-sphere of domination and possessiveness. The crude sex-drive has no compounds and is not differentiated; only its blending

with ego-tendencies results in divergences and in those pathological deviations which we call perversions. The psychoanalysts have not yet seen that perversions are not merely sexual phenomena.

The impression that the sex-urge can itself have the characteristics of domination and submission is a delusion. Of course, a primitive instinct does not know any consideration or regard for an object which is used for gratification of needs; for only the resistance of the object will arouse wild or violent reactions. That some mixture of the sex-urge with the ego-tendencies must have occurred very early in human development is clearly proved by the character of the sex-act itself, which even now shows the traces of a struggle. Such seeming evidence, however, can be of only little comfort to the psychoanalysts. The offensiveness of their theories lies just in their capacity of being partly right and in their claim that they present the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The libido theory is, and remains, the weakest part of Freud's great achievement.

The analytical term psychosexuality often covers a mixture of sex and the lust to conquer. That such blending of the two drives was well known before psychoanalysis appeared can be proved by numerous observations to be found in novels and plays. I choose one instance from Bernard Shaw's *Widowers' Houses*. Blanche and Trench, the lovers of the play, have a quarrel and separate. Trench has business in the house of Blanche's father and is for some minutes alone. He looks around carefully, then goes on tiptoe to the piano, leans upon it with folded arms, gazing at the beloved's portrait. The latter herself appears presently at the study door. When she sees how he is occupied, she steals over to him, watching him intently. He rises from his leaning attitude, takes the portrait from the easel, and is about to kiss it when, taking a second look, he finds Blanche close upon him. He drops the portrait, and stares at her. He flushes and retreats a step. She follows him up remorselessly. Red and wincing, he starts huffily to get his hat from the table. When he turns to the door with it, she deliberately stands in his way so he has to stop. Blanche: "I don't want you to stay." For a moment they stand face to face, quite close to each other, she provocative, taunting, half defying, half inviting him to advance, in a flush of undisguised animal excitement. It



suddenly flashes on him that all this ferocity is erotic, that she is making love to him. This description is the more remarkable as it concerns aggressiveness in love-making on the part of the woman. Such aggressiveness in women occurs sometimes when the man does not take the initiative in wooing. Some women become impatient in such situations. ("Waiting too long makes me nervous as a cat," said one of them.) If the man remains too passive, the woman takes over the active rôle.

The share of the ego-drives in this every man's and woman's land, where love and sex meet and merge, is much harder to observe and to grasp. We described, when we sketched the prephases of love, how it results from an emotional reaction to tendencies of greed, hostility, and aggressiveness. It cannot be helped that these powers, overcome and overrun by passion, often assert themselves suddenly in the midst of love, just as the old Titans, banished by the Greek gods to the underworld, rebelled against the new usurpers. Love does not achieve permanent peace in the battle between the sexes, but only a longer or shorter armistice.

There is no blinking the fact that sometimes intense impulses of hostility appear in the midst of love, surprising tendencies to hurt the object of affection. They are survivals of the original emotions, remnants of its initial phases. We can even observe, though rarely, fleeting envious thoughts and greedy impulses towards the beloved. Ordinarily we need not worry about these emotions, but they can play a decisive rôle in the battle between the sexes.<sup>1</sup> Their existence itself proves that sex and tenderness do not alone govern the relationship between the sexes, but that a silent factor also exists whose power is often neglected or underrated, the old ego-drives which can never be entirely absorbed. The original emotions, envy, greed, possessiveness, and hostility, will reappear when love fades. In its decomposition and decay the

<sup>1</sup> There is a margin of doubt whether Strindberg was the first writer who expressed consciously the hate in love. When Henry Becque, the writer of the naturalistic play *La Parisienne*, died in 1899, a poem was found among his belongings. It contains the line: "*J'étais brutal et langoureux, elle était ardente et cruelle,*" and begins thus:

*Je n'ai rien qui me la rappelle  
Pas de portrait, pas de cheveux  
Je n'ai pas une lettre d'elle  
Nous nous detestions tous les deux.*

components which operated at the birth of romance will reveal themselves. The clash of wills appears again toward the end as at the beginning.

The lust for domination exists certainly in men and women alike, but it does not work in them with the same intensity. There is an element of the hunter in men, the impulse of the trapper in women. This lust of the chase intensifies the sexual pleasure, whets the male appetite. It becomes for many men a psychical necessity. Some men even lose their sexual desire to a certain extent if they meet no resistance whatsoever. A patient once told me of an incident with a young lady among his casual acquaintances who seemed attractive to him. After a party, at which they both had a good time, he accompanied her home for a final cocktail. He felt slightly excited sexually while she changed her clothes. She appeared in a seductive negligee, and as they drank their cocktails she said, "Why waste time with all these preliminaries? Let's go to bed." The man was immediately sobered. He did not conceal his resentment that she had deprived him of the satisfaction of wooing and conquering her, of overcoming her hesitancy and resistance. He took his hat and left.

Even where the reactions are not as forthright as in this example, the absence of some show of resisting on the part of the woman is silently regretted by the man. What pleasure is there for a hunter if the game is a willing target? The satisfaction of conquest, the wrestling with resistance have become an inherent factor in the preliminary skirmishes. Freud was of the opinion that a conviction accepted easily and without preliminary skepticism cannot be steady and precious. He talked about this subject at one of his Wednesday evenings to which we, his older followers, were invited at his house and he finished with the pregnant sentence: "Convictions, and women we can get easily, are not greatly appreciated by us."

The masculine wish to conquer has its place in the subtle strategy of romance. To chase a man may be a wrong move which makes him retreat, and to run away from him when he hesitates may be the best way of catching him. My experiences in psychoanalysis show that this principle (contrary to the common view) is especially valid with feminine men. They seem to be particu-



larly sensitive to an active approach on the part of a woman. This attitude is intensified to the point of fear and hostility in many homosexual men, who often develop a kind of mild persecution-mania as if all women sought to have sex relations with them. Often it becomes obvious that these men attribute their own unconscious tendencies to the women who "pursue" them. Homosexual men often misinterpret little signs of interest or friendliness in this sense.

To conquer a woman can even be a satisfaction for the large group of men who think of women only when they feel the physical need for them and for whom love is a word used only in magazines and movies. They also often feel challenged by obstacles; the conquest becomes a matter of personal prestige to them. They enjoy courtship in the same way they would enjoy hunting, and some of them feel cheated if they have their will too easily. The psychology of the lady-killers appears to have much more to do with this lust for conquest than with sex. Men often think that they are "happy in love" while they are only triumphant about a victory. Don Juan must have needed a lot of bolstering for his insecure ego. He who needs so many women cannot have really appreciated them or have been in love with them. You would expect that a man who enjoys the favor of many women and girls would be a friend of the fairer sex and grateful for all the affection he has received. As a matter of fact, most of these Don Juans are women haters. This trait also makes it obvious that victory over women is to men of this type more important than the sexual satisfaction. Perhaps it would be better to say that the satisfaction of this particular desire seems to them the greatest pleasure to be derived from sex.

The rôle of masculine pride must next be considered. What is pride, psychologically speaking? It is a defensive attitude neglected by contemporary psychology, but of great import for the understanding of human behavior. It originates as a protective measure in a person after he has been hurt, and it not only conceals but also reveals his vulnerability. It is comparable to the hard skin which forms after a wound has healed. The pride of the man in his relationships with women is, in the first place, a sexual one, as if he were not sure of his sexual power. His functioning in sexual

intercourse has thus the character not only of physical satisfaction, but also of victory. Unconsciously, and often enough even consciously, sexual intercourse has also the character of a test for the man. He apparently has to prove to himself that he is a man, to assert himself as such if he doubted his potency. Such a doubt of his own potency can be a serious impediment in the approach to women; such a man is afraid of the challenge which sexual intercourse presents to him. He is frightened at the thought that a woman may consider him as not very virile ("that I am not a man"). The primitive pride which centers around the sex-rôle is foreign to women.<sup>2</sup> Their pride springs from another cause. A man wants to assure himself again and again that he is strong and manly. He is proud if he can intensely desire a woman sexually. A woman is rather ashamed if she is only sexually desired.

The pride of women is, as I have said, of a different kind, but it is rather more developed than the man's. Her vulnerability is greater and concerns other psychical spheres. The need to conquer has a subtler manifestation in her. She also enjoys the power she has over the man, but she prefers to have this power, not just because she is a woman, but because she is herself. Very few women are satisfied with the power almost any woman can have over an excited man. They prefer to dominate not because they are women, but because of their individual endowments. A woman does not want to be appreciated simply as a member of her sex, but as a personality. The contrasting character of masculine and

<sup>2</sup> In a recent article ("Sex and Character," in *Psychiatry*, 6:21, February, 1943) Dr. Erich Fromm has correctly pointed out "that there are certain characterological differences which reflect the different rôles of men and women in sexual intercourse." He notes also that "the anxieties of men and women refer to different spheres; the man concerning his ego, his prestige, his value in the eyes of the woman; the woman's concerning her sexual pleasure and satisfaction." Woman depends on man's ability to carry her to the orgasm, and she fears to be "left alone" if the man excites her but is unable to bring her sexual fulfillment. Dr. Fromm oversimplifies the picture of the situation. The fear he alludes to is present in women only after they have experienced a man's repeated failure. No such anxiety is felt by women who have never experienced the sexual failure of men. On the other hand, there is frequently an apprehension in women that they themselves cannot reach sexual satisfaction on account of their own shortcomings (shame, fear, unconscious hostility against the man, and other inhibitions). Even doubts concerning their own appearance can work upon them in this way. Many women know consciously or unconsciously that they are often co-responsible for the sexual failure of the man. Many of them feel a secret pride in their ability to raise the man to potency.



feminine pride is best compared with their respective attitudes toward the question of individuality in other matters. I saw a little picture (was it in the English *Punch*?) in which this contrast is prettily illustrated. On one side of a hat store a clerk, in the act of recommending a hat to a man, is saying, "Take this, sir. All gentlemen in the city wear these hats." On the other side a salesgirl is assuring a customer with the words, "Take this hat, madam. No other lady in the city has such a hat."

There is a concealed fear in women that men appreciate her as a female and not as an individual. She is afraid that he desires her not as a particular woman, but as the nearest available female. She needs assurance that he wants her, not merely any pretty woman. Kipling says: "A man must go to women, which women don't understand." Most of them do; they can even be tolerant of the fact, but they do not want to be included in the group of women men must go to. They know how easy it is to arouse a man sexually and how difficult it is to make him love. To have power over a man feeds their pride, it is true, but it depends on the character of this power whether or not a woman can allow herself to be proud of it.<sup>3</sup>

They know what their destiny would be if they should give in too easily to men; they would be sexually used and then thrown aside. An old secret feminine tradition—beware of men—is taught to every little girl who grows up. Women are afraid that they will first be used and then abused. They need a guarantee that they will be loved as well as desired. They are permanently haunted by the thought that they will quickly be abandoned after the man has had his sexual will with them. This is the reason why they begin, as Oscar Wilde once said, by resisting man's advance and end by blocking his retreat. They know that they can hold men only when they show reluctance at first. "What will he think of me?" is the question eternally in their minds. A girl once told me

<sup>3</sup> Stendhal characterized this pride and this particular sensitiveness of women as follows: "A woman of generous character will sacrifice her life a thousand times for her lover and will break with him forever over a quarrel of pride about an open or closed door." It is remarkable that women are much more reluctant to admit their shortcomings to men than men are to women. If they repent a wrong action against the man, they are not only unwilling to admit it in words but they also anticipate his reproach and mind it so much that they react with resentment.

she wished to know whether a certain young man was in love with her, but immediately added that she did not want to know because the knowledge might deprive her of her spontaneity. My impression is that the tendency to try to anticipate reactions is much more developed in women than in men. It partly explains why women in general have a finer social tact than men. A young girl once confided to me that she was frequently uncertain how to behave when she met a young man on the street. Should she look straight at him as he came towards her? He might take such a look as a kind of invitation, and looking might betray her interest. But looking away, she thought, would also reveal her attraction by indicating that she had purposely avoided looking at him.

Such anticipation of the man's reaction can even become unconscious. Understanding this fact gives the cue to feminine attitudes which sometimes puzzle the cleverest of us. We can understand this trait more clearly if, for example, we consider that women are very sensitive about their appearance and the impression it makes. Why does a girl suddenly become gloomy? Nothing in the friendly conversation which preceded her change of mood seems to justify it. The man does not know that she has just caught a glimpse of her image in the mirror on the wall and thinks that she does not look well. A young man who visited a girl was surprised to find her rather reserved and unfriendly, although she had been gracious and friendly on previous visits. He did not guess that she felt uncomfortable because she had washed her hair shortly before he came and that she was worried because it was still wet. A concern about the impression she makes on the man is seldom absent from a woman's mind,<sup>4</sup> a fact which determines her attitude in the battle of the sexes.

A woman catches the undertones in the behavior of men, is sensitive to the slightest neglect or lack of attentiveness, the smallest changes in their moods. Her self-respect demands that she must not yield to a man who does not appreciate her as a human being.

<sup>4</sup> A patient remembers from early childhood that she became embarrassed while she was on a swing because her bloomers did not match her dress. So early do little girls learn to look at themselves with the eyes of others. This same patient said, "When I am dressed shabbily I hate everybody." Thoughts like "How on earth can he like me looking as I do?" or "Why cannot he see me now?" are very frequent with women.



Women's pride shows their vulnerability. They know well—better than the psychoanalysts—that sexual desire and love have different birthdays.

In men the will to conquer is supported by a strange kind of curiosity which is not merely concerned with the body. The day-dreams of a young man anticipate the surrender of the woman and are preoccupied with images of how she will behave in surrendering to him. It is less the image of the desired body than the words and gestures, the behavior of the beloved woman, which these excited fantasies call up. Some unconscious sense tells the young man that the woman who gives her body to him gives him more than her body. She reveals more than her physical charms to him. He feels that in her surrender she gives away her secret self. It is significant that the Bible uses the expression "to know a woman" in the sense of having sexual intercourse with her. The main theme of such male fantasies are erotic, if not crudely sexual, but they are not restricted to sex alone. They circle round the person of the love-object, her character, her behavior, her thoughts and feelings, and often they wish to penetrate into the core of her being.

In such fantasies a kind of mental possessiveness, a desire to own the person, her body and her mind, comes to clear expression. Such possessiveness is often combined with an odd feeling of jealousy, which fluctuates strangely between the opposites of tenderness and cruelty. A young man said to the girl with whom he was in love, "I would like to know what your hands have done all your life." Another young man observed his newly-wed wife in her conversations with other people with a kind of fascination; and when she smilingly turned to him, he had the happy feeling that she had come back to him. The possessive desire to know everything about the love-object sometimes reveals its nature, if it deteriorates, in tormenting inquiry and self-torture.

The old Casanova wrote in his *Memoirs* that love "is three-quarters curiosity." Such a statement is less significant for the subject matter than for the person who holds it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Although a psychoanalyst, Dr. C. M. Herold (*The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1942) expressed the same view some centuries after Casanova, declaring that the essence of love is curiosity, a desire to know the subject, it still remains more than three-quarters wrong. It is as refreshingly naïve as if a person were to confuse a seasoning the cook has added to the food with its essential material.

It is not unimportant that the adventurer saw in love only physical pleasure. When he spoke or wrote about "*l'amour*," the word does not connote tenderness but only sexual enjoyment.<sup>6</sup> It is almost identical with "*volupté*." The proportion he attributes to curiosity shows, however, that the lust to conquer meant much to him. What else than a mental form of the will to conquer is curiosity in love?

<sup>6</sup> Compare a sentence of old Anatole France remembering the fashion of ladies' dresses which had once an abundance of buttons: "*Il y a trente ans les modes feminine étaient tres cruel pour les amants.*"



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## *The Itch to Get Even*

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AN ABUNDANCE of problems exist in the interplay of the sex-urge, desire for domination, and tenderness. Let me remind you of the conflicts which originate in the different emotional needs of both sexes, of the insistence of women that sex can only be thought of in connection with affection, of the conflicts which rise out of their hurt pride, and of the violent reactions of men who feel offended in their masculine ambitions. Let me remind you also of the old rivalry of the sexes which is not destroyed but is merely submerged by tenderness and is always ready to rise anew. They have been so often discussed that I need not enlarge upon them here.

There is, however, an emotional phenomenon which occurs so frequently in the relations between the sexes that you wonder why it has not been more seriously considered by the psychologists. In the many hundreds of books I have read on the problems of marriage, love, and sex I have not found more than scant mention of it here and there. I mean the almost indomitable wish to get even with the other person who has hurt one's feelings.

It is clear that no love relationship is possible when the superiority of one partner is used to overmaster the other person. Even the realization by one that the other has taken an unfair advantage of him has often a lasting, though unconscious, effect and expresses itself in hidden resentment. The stimulus of vindictiveness is also astonishingly strong in people who admit that they love each other. Rancor and bitterness can survive for a long time after their motive has been forgotten. Your estimate of human ability to forgive and forget becomes very modest, when

you realize that the psychoanalyses of many persons of both sexes plainly show the wish to get even with one's partner continues to live long after it is consciously felt. To pay back the offender, to let him have his own medicine, if possible a greater dose, remains one of the unconscious desires in the emotional life of married persons or lovers. It expresses itself not only in latent sabotage of the other person's efforts and in open warfare, but also in an undercurrent of hostility and vindictiveness the duration of which is often astonishing. It lives in unconscious fantasies and reveals itself in little symptomatic actions which illuminate suddenly the psychical situation between two persons as flashlights do a dark scene.

This spirit of revenge betrays itself in a tension, felt but not consciously apprehended, and permeates to the core of their relationship. Their deep vindictiveness is capable of convincing anyone that women can be as cruel as men. I know a girl who, after many years of "happy" marriage, did not forgive her husband because he had had an affair with another girl while he had been her fiancé. It is well known that a woman who marries a widower can rarely tolerate his praise of his deceased first wife. She will resent long afterwards a comparison made to her own disadvantage. In such circumstances love kindles hostility.

A girl married a man who for a long time had seemed indifferent to her open admiration of him. As his wife she felt a long-lasting hidden resentment against him. She hated him because she had to "catch" him instead of being wooed by him. She could not forgive him because she had often felt humiliated by this reversal of their proper rôles before the marriage. Revenge fantasies of women who feel rejected or who were wooed after a long period of waiting are very frequent. As a retaliation they imagine that they would refuse the man if he were to fall in love with them. A girl complained, "He is so distant that I cannot even be cold to him. I wish he would feel attracted to me so that I could reject him." Another girl had a very vivid fantasy in which she would become a famous singer and that she would have a great success at an opera performance at which also a certain young man is present. He waits for her at the stage door, but she passes by without looking at him, and when he walks up to her, she says



coldly: "Let me go." The most frequent form of such fantasies is that the woman would go out with other men for the purpose of showing the loved and hated person how they are admired and appreciated.

The clash of wills which secretly preceded affection will often be revived in another form. Psychoanalysts are astonished to find how resentful men and women can unconsciously feel while their relations remain friendly on the surface. You sometimes get the impression that the original relationship of man to woman and of woman to man was hostile, as if hate and fear existed at the very beginning of human relations.

Why does vindictiveness play such a rôle under the surface in the emotional life of a couple? Many causes may exist for one-sided or mutual grudges, but apparently those most seriously felt are real or fancied injuries to the person's self-esteem. The reason is clear. We have asserted that love removes the inner insecurity, the doubt of one's worth and value, and gives the lover assurance of his self-respect and dignity. Naturally doubt that he is loved throws him back into the old insecurity, renews his doubt of himself, reawakens the discontent in himself. An old anxiety comes back, which the certainty of being loved had overcome. Being loved made him seem invulnerable, but now he is again exposed to self-torment because he has lost the self-confidence he had regained through love. I have a strong impression that the feeling of being unwanted, the genuine emotion expressed in the words "nobody loves me" is in its psychical character related to fear, sometimes even to the fear of dying. The situation, in which a person becomes suddenly aware that he is not loved any more, begets an emotion similar to the agony of death, or perhaps to the panic of a child who is suddenly abandoned by his mother.

It seems in truth as if the conviction of one's own value—guaranteed and confirmed by being loved—is a protection against this anxiety.

To be robbed of this sense of one's value as a human being is like being thrown back into the pitch darkness of self-dislike, from which the person was rescued by love. When men and women who suddenly detect that they are not loved any more by the person who had loved them tell us they feel like dying, they do

not greatly exaggerate. It means they are exposed to a similar anxiety as in the case of a deadly danger. They do not know that this danger comes from within, from the self-destructive tendencies in the deep layers of the unconscious mind.

Let us approach the problem from another angle: There is a serious form of insanity called paranoia, in which the patient feels endangered by known or unknown persons who seem to plot against him and want to restrict his freedom and take his life. In the very vivid fantasies of paranoiacs people conspire against them, persecute them, have designs upon their lives and safety. Highly mistrustful and often keen-sighted, these patients interpret little everyday events and actions as directed against them, as circumstantial evidence of the imaginary plot which is secretly formed against them. They are often afraid of mysterious menaces which threaten them. At the same time they develop a megalomania, in which they figure as great and very important personalities with a mission to their people or to the whole of mankind.

The interpretation which psychoanalysis has given to these strange cases of insanity presents the emotional processes which lead to the disease as unconscious rejections of a powerful homosexual inclination. The person who appears as the persecutor to the paranoiac was originally a man who was loved, a relative, a friend, a doctor, a teacher. This homosexual striving, unconsciously disavowed by the paranoiac, changes to hostility against the same person. The hostility remains unconscious and the paranoiac attributes his own aggressive dislike to the person who stimulated his repressed homosexuality. The process thus follows the formula: I love him. No, I hate him. He hates me. Only the last phase of it is conscious.

The concept of paranoia, as Freud presents it, is not wrong, but is distorted and twisted. In the few paranoiacs I have observed the real psychical process took the following form: the patient felt an intense unconscious hostility. He wanted to be loved in order to calm the anxiety aroused by his own repressed aggressiveness and hostility. He became unconsciously afraid that he would not be loved because he does not deserve to be. The feeling of not being loved was unconsciously felt as identical with the certainty of being hated. It was as if two words, synonyms, were being



used for the same thing. The projection, which is, of course, the most important phase in the psychical process, could be formulated as follows: "I hate him. I wish to be loved by him, although I hate him. He does not love me. He hates me." Through projection of his own original unconscious hate of a person the paranoiac appears to himself to be the victim of that person's hostility. The paranoiacs need for being loved and appreciated and at the same time his desire to be forgiven for his own hostility can clearly be observed by the psychologist.

The megalomania itself appears to be chiefly a compensatory attempt on the part of the paranoiac to reassure himself that he deserves to be appreciated and loved. The whole problem of paranoia is of interest to us only because it seems to confirm the theory that the original attitude of men toward men is hostility. The sense of one's own value depends to a great part on the factor of whether a person can be tolerant towards his own unconscious aggressiveness and hostility. The weak spot in the personality of these patients is just this uncertainty of his own value, his small measure of self-confidence, which in the later developments of the disease is overcompensated by megalomaniac ideas about himself. We observe that the feeling of not being loved creates anxiety and is unconsciously construed as equivalent to being hated. When one feels unwanted and unloved, the air is full of danger and menace, even of threat of death.

A French writer once remarked that love is essentially "*absence de l'anxiété*." Such an epigram will, of course, be pushed aside contemptuously by psychoanalysts (especially, to quote Gilbert and Sullivan, "when it happens by chance to be imported from France") but there is a psychological insight in it. Love is impossible when you are afraid of a person. On the other hand, love removes fear. Paranoiacs may be said to have no material reasons, but good psychological ones, for being afraid of their "persecutors." Unconsciously paranoiacs know that their own hatred of their supposed persecutors ought logically to arouse a return of hostility.

Let us consider from a different angle the problem of why the sense of self-value is so important to a person and of why, if its loss is threatening us, all lights seem to go out. Retaining one's

self-respect is psychologically necessary, as necessary as keeping physically healthy. An injury to one's self-respect is felt as a menace like a dangerous illness to physical life. The psychical health of a person depends on his self-esteem quite as much as his physical health does on a good constitution. We can now understand better why attacks which are directed against this core of a love-relationship have such deep and lasting repercussions. Goethe once expressed the key idea of this problem in forceful language. He states that it does not matter whether you lose anything else so long as you possess yourself, so long as you remain what you are. The blow which hits this weakest spot of a cultured person, his self-confidence, the value he places on himself, can be felt as mortal, especially if it is dealt by a beloved person. This invisible factor causes the heavy casualties in the battle between the sexes. The illusion of invulnerability and security disappear in a moment, and man is again exposed to the coldness and loneliness which fill him with panic and with the presentiment of the end.

It is not true that sexuality is missed in the situation. If it were, physical satisfaction is easily available. But other wants are felt here which cannot be satisfied as readily. There is no doubt in my mind that after our most primary urges are gratified, the two emotions which govern our lives are the fear of dying and the wish to be loved.



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## *Note on Jealousy*

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THE SUBJECT of jealousy, strictly speaking, does not belong to the realm of the psychology of love. Some people argue that there is no real love without jealousy, but I do not agree with this view. Their statement is equivalent to saying that there is no healthy person who is not sometimes ill. While it is true that no healthy people exist who are never ill, yet disease itself is not a sign of health, but of its disturbance. This disturbance will occur several times in a long life and will be overcome. It will not impugn the basically healthy nature of the person; nevertheless, it is a functional interruption. In the same way jealousy is a sign that something is wrong, not necessarily rotten, in the organism of love, which is so often beset by troubles. In this sense jealousy is a symptom of an internal disturbance, but not the disease itself.

Jealousy has been studied in all its forms and pathological manifestations. Until recently, it seems to me, the nature of the illness has defied every attempt at a psychological explanation. I cannot pretend to have found a concept which is clearer than that of any other investigator. My contribution to the subject may be valued, not as an explanation, but perhaps as a preparation for one. My analysis is the result of conclusions derived from the psychoanalytic study of many cases of "normal" and abnormal jealousy.

Rather than present case histories and clinical material I prefer to set forth a number of impressions which I received from reading a paper on *Othello*. These impressions, contradictory in themselves, led spontaneously to the formation of a view which, far from being final, furnishes some provisional psychological results. I admit that I have nothing more to offer at present, but a

research worker (if he sincerely believes that he is on the right track) need not be ashamed to point out that his inquiry has reached only a preliminary stage.

The author of the book mentioned before<sup>1</sup> states most emphatically that *Othello* is not a tragedy of jealousy at all. He points out that the hero is at first strangely free from jealousy and that this passion is not a leading feature of the Moor's character. The secret of the play is this: the conflict is not between love and jealousy, but between love and honour. Othello does not want to become a dupe. Our author refers to Othello's statement that he has done "All in honour, naught in hate." He shows how the Moor—son of a despised race, but full of pride on account of his mysterious, royal descent—becomes a successful warrior and a great general, honoured by Venice, and how he slowly becomes the victim of dark fatality. Othello, "one not easily jealous," who has achieved a great social triumph in winning the love of the sweet lady, Desdemona, sees himself as the object of shame and contempt of the Venetian nobility among whom he has lived as an honoured equal. He sees himself again defeated and deceived. In his fevered imagination he sees himself thrown back into the class of despised inferiors over whom the white race will again be victorious. Then he, the Moor, will again be the pariah, the scorned outcast. And now this man of vehement passion, stirred to the depths, becomes personified fury, hate, and violence. The scholarly author thus conceives of *Othello* as the tragedy of race-hate and of the feeling of inferiority produced by it.

My first impression after reading the paper was strong rather than deep. It was not lasting because, though I had to admit that the writer argued his point well, it seemed not the only nor even the most prominent one. Although definitely one-sided, the view had some justification. It neglected, even eliminated, jealousy as the leading passion. The theme of jealousy was pushed into the background, an unimportant and inconsequential side-show to the great tragedy of Othello's inferiority feeling on account of his race. Older impressions, gained from reading and seeing Shakespeare's play performed, returned to mind and demanded a hearing.

<sup>1</sup> Welker Given, "A Further Study of the Othello," *Papers of the Shakespeare Society of New York*, No. 11, 1899.



Again and again fantasy brought before my mind's eye the picture of Othello and Desdemona, the night scene before her father, the report of Othello's wooing, the farewell and the return, the last conversation before Desdemona's death, and the cry of Othello over her body. Can all this be only the result of a hidden race-feeling? Certainly not.

Yet there is something in this writer's thesis in spite of our objections. We finally conclude that we have here contradictory impressions and that the cause remains unsolved and undecided.

After I had re-examined the phenomenon of jealousy as I had been able to observe it in analysis of living persons, an idea occurred to me as to what the psychological connection might be. By means of new impressions received, the everyday experience connected with these cases, contradictions disappeared, and a new concept of jealousy became probable. It was of course nonsense to subordinate the cardinal feature of jealousy in *Othello* to the element of racial discrimination and to the feeling of inferiority thus engendered. Nevertheless, there is a bridge, not to hate of a racial minority, but to feelings of insecurity in the individual. This is perhaps the determining factor in the psychical origin of jealousy. According to this new concept, *Othello* remains the tragedy of jealousy, but at the same time the play gives us a new insight into the method by which jealousy is born.

Originally love is motivated by the dissatisfaction of a person with himself, conditioned by a sense of inner insecurity and awareness of failure in the attempt to fulfill certain demands arising from within. Love seems to fulfill these demands by the extension of a person's ego and by incorporating another ego, the love-object. Dissatisfaction disappears. The person is not only content with himself and others, but is definitely happy. He has found his real self in the physical and psychological form of his supplement, the beloved object. The certainty of loving and being loved sweeps away all personal insecurity. The world again becomes full and whole as in the days before its unity was menaced by the existence in him of a critical, self-condemnatory attitude.

Jealousy marks the return of the original self-distrust after one has first attained security through love. There is no jealousy without a long, subterranean preparation for it in fantasy. This

preparation, if it were conscious, could be expressed in certain statements and in questions which are answered at first doubtfully but later on with conviction. The first question concerns the love-object rather than one's rival. Does Jane, let us say, love me? Why should she? Am I worthy of being loved? Am I lovable enough? Why should she love me when she is surrounded by countless others who, by virtue of their physical attraction, endowments, or achievements, deserve her love much more? Othello, for instance, thinking of all the rich Venetian noblemen, asks himself why Desdemona should choose him, a homeless foreigner of a despised race, without riches, no longer young, unlike and racially not considered the equal of the proud lords of her city.

The first phase of jealousy is, I repeat, a return of one's doubts of self and dissatisfaction with it. The first expressions of these emotions are suspicions of one's own worth as evaluated by the love-object. These doubts, recurring after the ego has gained its victory through love, remain unconscious so far as direct self-evaluation is concerned. They can only become conscious in the form of doubts about the real love of one's object. Expressed in a formula showing the operation of the projection, in its course from the unconscious to the conscious level, we have the following: I am not worthy of her love; she feels that I am not worthy of her love. The first doubt remains unconscious. The second can become conscious, but it need not and often does not.

The second phase takes the form of a comparison of oneself with another—imaginary or real—who, because of superior qualities, has a better claim on the loved one's affections. In the delusions of pathological cases, imaginary rivals appear in the fantasy of the patient. This new development which absorbs a third person into the imaginary scheme can be traced back to the time when the child compared himself unfavorably with other children. In childhood the whole conflict originated—the dissatisfaction with oneself, the need for recognition. Again, to express it in a formula, we may say that the continuation of the emotional process, hidden from the person himself, runs thus: "She thinks that I am not worthy of her love and that he is."

The whole development is usually unconscious. Only occasionally do a few suggestive manifestations appear, pulled up into the



realm of conscious thinking, to indicate what is going on deep inside the individual. They are like those marine oddities, long buried in the mysterious depths of the sea, which are sometimes swept up onto the shore. Usually only the last link of the whole chain of thought becomes conscious; namely, "She loves him and not me." In the last phase this does not appear as a suspicion any longer but as a certainty founded on the latent conviction of one's own unworthiness as compared with the superior value of one's rival. I need not add that this rival does not appear superior in the eyes of the jealous lover. The latter feels convinced only that his loved one sees such superiority in the other fellow. This trait is also an outcome of the projection which has taken place while the doubt of oneself is denied and is transferred to the beloved.

We must mention and underscore two features especially. The suspicion is there before the rival appears on the scene. It is as if the person who wants to be jealous were in search of the man of whom to be jealous. His search is always successful. If no such rival exists, the doubter will create one in fantasy, and all his imaginings will point to the fact that the rival is preferred by the love-object. He then becomes a phantom-figure, so to speak, the personification of a thought-possibility, and a substitute for a better self. Disappointment in the love situation is unconsciously prepared for and a hundred times anticipated.

A real rival is missing, as is also proof of the love-object's infidelity. The existence of both, however, can be easily established by the doubter, either by misinterpretation of real facts or by the distorting power of imagination. The mind of the jealous person never tires of finding circumstantial evidence to confirm his suspicions. At all events, he seizes every opportunity to make certainties and convictions of doubts and suspicions. The second trait, belief in the object's unfaithfulness, cannot be easily shaken because its deepest roots are in self-doubt and in the lingering thought of one's own unworthiness transferred to the loved one. For this doubt, too, he has no difficulty in finding causes. External conditions become pretexts for his imperfections and failures. A recurrent uncertainty as to whether he or another man is preferred by the love-object represents the doubt about his own worthi-

ness and replaces this original, unconscious suspicion in the judgment of the conscious mind.

Finally, let me cast a glance at the psychological development in Othello. A homeless foreigner, member of a disdained race, scorned by Venetian noblemen, he wins victories for the army and is honoured by the government. Though advanced in years, he woos and wins the sweet Desdemona, who has refused numberless attractive lords. Now, after a new victory over the enemies of the state, the change in him begins. Even before this he must unconsciously have felt doubtful, must have distrusted his good luck in the depths of his being, must have believed it was too good to be true or to remain so. Iago represents this other, hidden self with its concealed doubts.<sup>2</sup> What Iago says only reflects the unconscious thoughts of the Moor, giving them voice through the mouth of another.

These deep, lingering suspicions become more urgent after his winning of Desdemona despite the opposition of her father and in face of the envious indignation of many of his officers, sensed rather than known. Awareness of being exposed to such hostility on the part of those outside but near him, and the knowledge that he, a foreigner, has been lucky beyond belief, both favor his feeling of inner insecurity. In spite of his merits, Othello has a chip on his dark shoulder. He, the Moor among white people who remain hostile while honouring him superficially, is never free from this nagging sense of inferiority. Growing mistrust gradually changes into certainty, and now he becomes the victim of the green-eyed monster. If he had been unconsciously more self-confident, he would have been able to resist his doubts of himself more effectively and would have felt surer of Desdemona's love. Love is the means by which all these doubts of oneself are overcome. Like all jealous people, he needs much love to lull his sense of insecurity. He calls himself one "who loved not wisely but too well." He might better have said that he was one who wanted to be loved not wisely but too well. The extreme need for love in such

<sup>2</sup> In a conversation Mr. Kimon Friar, who lectures on English literature, pointed out that Iago himself is driven by envy and self-hatred. Mr. Friar finds the key for Iago's actions in the anguished remark which Iago makes about Cassio before he murders him in ambush: "He hath a daily beauty in his life which makes mine ugly."



cases as his is insatiable because the doubt from within cannot be removed even by the most convincing proofs and expressions of affection. The deep-rooted suspicions in him could not be pacified. No Iago needed to appear to arouse them. They were there already in Othello's unconscious thoughts, and it is fairer to say that they made use of Iago than that Iago made use of Othello.

Feelings of inferiority arising from racial discrimination is not the theme of *Othello*. The conflict does not circle around the question of honour.

The victories Othello had won do not make for him a sufficient basis for inner security and satisfaction. "Pride, pomp and circumstances of glorious war," are not enough for him; only Desdemona's love can give him the feeling of self-fulfillment. Does he feel inferior to the Venetian nobleman? Certainly not as a man and a soldier. He feels as much or as little inferior to them as Beethoven to the Viennese aristocrats who won the "immortal beloved" from him. There was a deep conflict in Othello before he met Desdemona:

. . . and when I love thee not  
Chaos is come again.

Again? It must therefore have been in him before. He does not think that Desdemona became unfaithful to him only because he is a Moor. In his self-tormenting doubts he considers that she might prefer Cassio to him, "for I am black and have not those soft parts of conversation that chamberers have or I am declined into the vale of years." Is *Othello* really a tragedy of race prejudice only?

I have observed the development of passionate jealousy, almost as violent as Othello's, in a white man who had as much or as little reason for his doubt as the Moor. He was a self-made man of superior intelligence who had many achievements of which to be proud, yet he was obsessed by suspicions that his beautiful wife might be unfaithful to him. It became obvious in analysis that he did not feel capable of competing with so many younger and handsomer men who complimented his wife. He observed her constantly and interpreted every look directed to a younger man and every sentence in a conversation by the murky light of his jealous

thoughts. He once said, "I cannot compete with millions of younger and more attractive men." His doubts were really doubts of himself, because he was afraid that his physical and mental powers would diminish, that he was aging quickly. Below his jealousy ran the deep stream of self-distrust. This Othello-like character, who killed his wife only in his savage fantasies, was not a Negro. He was not even a Jew. The race question did not play any rôle in his case.

Another man drove his wife, of whom he was extremely jealous, into the arms of his rival. He said to her, "Go to him if I am not worthier than he. It is better this way if you are in doubt. Go to him." It was clear that hurt pride determined his attitude. He stepped aside because he was too proud to compete with the rival. The problem of jealousy is always connected with the sense of one's own value.

Shakespeare found the figure of the Moor in his sources. His genius scarcely needed this material to present the tragedy of jealousy. The origin and psychical effects of this violent passion could have been demonstrated in a play, the hero of which was not a Moor but a member of any so-called inferior race or group. He need not have had any social stigma. He could have been any man with a permanent and ineradicable doubt of himself, of his worth and achievements, any man always dissatisfied with himself and never finding redemption in a woman's love for him. The real cause of Othello's jealousy is effectively emphasized by the color of his skin and by the handicap to which it subjects him.

Othello imagines he has a rival because he feels inferior to a white nobleman. The result of his fantasy of doubt is tragic. Such tragedies also happen to persons in no way burdened with such an extraordinary handicap as that placed on Shakespeare's hero. They occur among us every day, in every city and little village all over the world. The essential factor is not that the jealous person belongs to a despised race, but that he suffers from the feeling of not being the equal of other men, in value or achievements, in his appearance or his nature.

Now we understand that part of the author's study of Othello is justified and that parts distorts his real psychological character. The author started at the wrong end. *Othello* does not present a



tragedy caused by consciousness of racial inferiority. It remains the tragedy of jealousy. It unconsciously penetrates into the deep motivation and psychical roots of this passion. In unforgettable pictures it shows that jealousy originates in the unconscious doubt of oneself and one's value, and that love alone is often incapable of overcoming the concealed sense of one's own inferiority. It is not essential that this feeling in Shakespeare's play should be associated with the race question. The race question is a pretext for the jealousy, as good or bad a one as any other. The secret of the drama is not to be found in such external problems, however well they may represent the deeper conflict, but in the emotional and unconscious process which leads to the growth of jealousy.

The problem in Shakespeare's play is not this single instance of Othello's violent passion, but jealousy itself, the passion which you and I have felt. Undoubtedly Shakespeare felt it. What the poet lets us understand, or makes us unconsciously aware of, is that jealousy does not originate in external circumstances, but depends upon lack of self-confidence and self-esteem; that it has its deepest roots in the unconscious opinions we have of ourselves. Psychologists do not always realize even now that the development of jealousy is not so much dependent on our attitude toward the love-object as on our attitude toward our own personality, our unconscious self-evaluation. When the science of the psychical processes has reached this point, it is ashamed to find that this insight was anticipated some centuries ago, not only by Shakespeare, but also by the Duc de La Rochefoucauld who wrote in the manuscript of his *Maximes* that there is more self-love than love in jealousy.

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## *Remark on Unfaithfulness*

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WHEN WE speak or think of unfaithfulness, we usually mean sexual infidelity proved by sexual activity with another person; that is, an action whose material reality cannot be denied. Is there unfaithfulness in love? If there is, it must be much more elusive; the circumstantial evidence must be much harder to obtain because the truth of infidelity in thoughts or emotions cannot be established beyond any reasonable doubt. It can also be argued that unfaithfulness in love is impossible because a person either loves another or does not. In the first of the two alternatives, disloyalty would contradict the idea of love; and in the second, love does not exist; hence no unfaithfulness is possible. But these are mere logical speculations, much like the fallacy that death is not to be feared because you need not be frightened so long as you are alive and you cannot be afraid when dead. Such logical considerations have never prevented people from being jealous in love or afraid of death.

As psychologists we can conceive of unfaithfulness as a phenomenon restricted to love, or to tender feelings alone. It would mean to choose another ego-phantom, to change the wish to be like one person into the wish to be like another person. Comparatively speaking, the shift is like the one a person undergoes in religious conversion, which compels him to change his faith from that of a Protestant, for instance, to the religious views of a Catholic. Since a change of views is possible, why should we doubt the occurrence of a change of heart?

We must now differentiate between three examples which are divergent in their features: first, the change of one's affection



from one object to another (we decide to call this "infidelity" too); second, a sexual attraction to another person; and thirdly, the merging of both feelings. It does not escape our notice that transitions from one form to the other are easily made. Nevertheless, there are clear distinctions similar to those we observe between love, sex and their reunion. This differentiation now takes the place of the previous one. Better said, the old differentiation remains valid beside the new one, and that new changes from one form to another become possible.

I contest the argument that such a fine discrimination is of no genuine importance. It makes a difference, from a psychological point of view whether it is interest, admiration, or affection which a woman discovers for another man, whether she is preoccupied with sexual fantasies about him or whether both kinds of attraction are equally present. A husband or a lover might be much more tolerant towards a "platonic" affection which his wife or sweetheart might feel for a man to whom she has never spoken than towards daydreams of a sexual nature which circle around him. A woman, on the other hand, may be much more indulgent towards a purely sexual attraction which her husband or lover shows for another girl than towards his appreciation of the personality of the other woman. In the latter case it is just the singleness, the uniqueness of the other person which might threaten her security and make her jealous. There was a proverbial saying among the ladies of old Vienna: "Many girls are not as dangerous as one girl." They knew that the flirtations of a man with many girls can remain harmless, that even transient affairs with one or another need not endanger the basic affection of a husband for his wife. They were more afraid of the combination of sexual interest with appreciation of the personality of another woman.

Most women are also more tolerant towards the attentions and compliments which their mate or lover may pay to a pretty girl than their husbands or lovers are towards the same friendliness shown to their wives and girls. This tolerance, which does not overestimate the importance of such attentions, is aided by women's recognition of the fact that men love to feel free and dislike to be stolidly aware that they are tied to one person. A lady who smilingly observed how her husband flirted with several girls reacted

in a characteristic manner to my friendly teasing that she seemed not to be jealous at all. She said, with regard to her husband and certainly to any man, "Give him a long rope and you will keep him."

I wonder whether psychologists have paid enough attention to the general differences between men's and women's jealousy. Woman's jealousy very rarely shows the features of senseless rage and seldom expresses itself in incessant self-torture and preoccupation with a thousand hateful pictures conjured up by the excited imagination. Jealousy does not frequently arouse women to such a degree of fury and does not plunge them into such states of despair as it does men. Nor does it drive woman as often to irrevocable acts of violence and revenge, to deeds of murder and destruction. A female counterpart of Othello is not easy to imagine. Men are often jealous of the past ("*on n'est jamais le premier*"); women rarely. They prefer to be the last love. A patient in psychoanalysis said about the mistress of her husband: "He can sleep with her, but he cannot talk with her." She did not feel jealous because her husband, for whom she cared, had only a sexual interest in the other woman. Not many men would feel the same way about their wives or sweethearts. In the jealousy of men the gnawing doubt is much more concerned with sexual activities than with affection. I heard once in France the bon mot that only bachelors know of what passionate love married women are capable.

Distinctions between infidelity in love, in sex, and in both simultaneously allow different possibilities, dependent upon whether unfaithfulness takes the form of thoughts or deeds. People did not consider such subtle differences so long as they remained on a low cultural level. Unfaithfulness of the wife or mistress in fantasy was no problem to the insensitive male so long as she remained faithful in reality.

The psychologists and the writers of our time have turned their attention to these more delicate and subtle forms in which imagination plays such a decisive part. Goethe was deeply interested in such problems. In his novel *Elective Affinities* he portrays a woman who is occupied in fantasies with images of another man with whom she has fallen in love, though she continues to have regular intercourse with her husband. Her marriage goes to piece



despite the fact that she remains physically faithful to her husband. It breaks down because of her infidelity in thought. During the hundred years since Goethe's novel was first published, the problem of mental infidelity has become one of the favorite subjects of our writers. These miners in the labyrinths of the psychological nether world have searched for a new evaluation of infidelity. They have not excluded the possibility—indeed, they often considered it to be a reality—that a man may sleep with one woman while he longs for another, and that he may not only use the first as a substitute for the second but may actually succeed imaginatively in effecting the substitution. Even the other possibility, that a woman may use her imagination in the same manner—certainly a much rarer phenomenon with women than with men—did not escape their psychological curiosity. In the witty series of dialogues *Reigen*, by Arthur Schnitzler, there is a scene in which one of these radically jealous and suspicious men is in bed with his mistress. During sexual intercourse he asks her, "With whom do you deceive me now?"

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## *Sideglance at Promiscuity*

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I AM CONCERNED in this book only with psychological questions, and therefore, in discussing promiscuity, I must exclude all other aspects such as sociological or economic ones. I am prepared to accept the reproach of being one-sided, but one-sidedness is not identical with narrow-mindedness. It is possible to concentrate on one phase of this problem and yet to acknowledge its complexity, to remain fully aware that there are other considerations. The problem of sexual promiscuity interests us here only as far as its psychological motivation may take us.

Variety is called "love's sweetest part" by John Donne. Is there an imminent need for variety in sex? Is promiscuity a result of this need, the expression of the insatiable covetousness of an especially strong sensuality? It is often said that persons who admit having practiced promiscuity in their sex life are perhaps oversexed. Is this opinion justified?

It seems to be generally supposed that the need for variety in sex is more developed in men than in women. The reason which is given for this preponderance among men is that they have a stronger sex-drive. It is further said that the passivity of women and the convention which prevents them from taking the sexual initiative repress free indulgence of such a need. I do not agree with this explanation. It is very doubtful whether women really have a weaker or less developed sex-urge.<sup>1</sup> The passionate aban-

<sup>1</sup> The difference of opinion as to who enjoys sexual intercourse more, man or woman, is old. Ovid reports (*Metamorphoses*, Book III, 324 ff) that Jove, while warmed with wine, bandied good-humored jests with Juno and declared, "I maintain that your pleasure is greater than we enjoy." The goddess held the opposite view. They decided to ask the judgment of wise Tiresias, who knew both sides of love because he had been changed into a woman and ha



donments of women are usually more profound than those of men. While a man becomes almost calm again, the woman may still be lost in ecstasy.

The fact that women play the passive rôle need not necessarily exclude a psychological need for variety. Indeed, there is a kind of passivity which can be subtly aggressive and conquering. The cultural pattern in which we live may suppress the manifestations of such a need, but it can exist as a psychological reality in spite of external influences. All these impediments which have been mentioned do not prevent women from showing, for instance, a decidedly stronger desire than men to attract notice. Coquetry is a female quality. It would, however, be wrong to confuse flirtatiousness or coquettishness with an urge to have promiscuous relations. We can thus support the impression that the need for a change of sex-object is generally stronger in men than in women, but that this predominance has other motives than a specially strong sex-urge.<sup>2</sup>

We realize that sexual promiscuity is either normal conduct on a low cultural level or the result of a psychological emergency in a highly developed society. On a low cultural level it does not make any great difference which object is chosen, for the sexual need can be as well satisfied with one object as with another. To paraphrase Gay, one can be happy with either dear charmer when t'other dear charmer's away. It is a case of "first come, first served." In higher phases of development, satisfaction is much more difficult to reach; the demands made of the object are more numerous and manifold. On the low scale, opportunity is everything; the nearest object is the best. On the high level a search is made for the best object.

We can put aside the question of promiscuity in half-civilized

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spent seven years in this form. Tiresias decided in favor of Jove's opinion in this playful dispute, and the grieved Juno condemned the arbitrator to perpetual blindness. It is significant that the goddess was furious at Tiresias, just as a woman today would resent a similar view. That she made him blind indicates that he has seen what should remain secret. T. S. Eliot, who alludes to this passage from Ovid, considers it "of great anthropological interest." (Notes on "The Waste Land," in *Collected Poems*, 1909-1935, p. 80.)

<sup>2</sup> Women recognize this masculine need but not many react to it with the self-confidence shown by a young lady who remarked to her fiancé, "I know that men love variety, but I am variety enough for you."

society because it holds no puzzle for us. The presence of a woman within reach is the decisive factor when sexual desire is aroused. Promiscuity in a civilized society is much more interesting. There cannot be any doubt that relapses into this previous phase are possible, regressions to the conduct of an earlier stage of cultural development. It is clear that lack of satisfaction is the cause which usually drives the man—more rarely the woman—from one partner to another. Lack of what satisfaction? Sexual satisfaction is, of course, the ready answer. I think that this answer is wrong, for the crude sex-drive is easily gratified. The fact that he is sexually unsatisfied is not what pushes a man into promiscuity, forces him to hunt for a great number of sex experiences which are chiefly inconsequential and casual. Here again we meet the old confusion of the crude sex-drive with the ego-gratifications of different kinds. Psychoanalysis often discovers that many men who are what is called "oversexed" suffer unconsciously from the lack of fulfillment of other ambitions and aspirations. Their physical energy seems to be displaced or shifted from the ego-drives to the realm of sex-urge. There are, of course, many motives for promiscuity like those of defiance, revenge, escape from homosexual inclinations, the allure of the forbidden relationship, the fascination of degradation, and others.

In most men who feel strongly the need of variety in sex it is certainly not the sex-drive but the impulse of conquest which makes them restless and forces them to search for new adventures. Very often doubt of one's own desirability or manliness plays a decisive rôle. The man's conduct seems to show that he wants to prove to himself that he is able to conquer so and so many women. A woman realized the psychological truth of this situation when she said to a man, "You do not really want me. You only want to make me want you."

This desire for conquest becomes stronger in the lady-killer than in other men. He collects women as a philatelist collects stamps. Such passion need not mean that a person understands women; it is rather convincing evidence that he does not. A man who understands one woman can really understand all women. To know only the sexual weaknesses of women is as little identical



with understanding them as knowledge of the genitals alone is equivalent to a mastery of human anatomy. I always thought that Don Juan in collecting women is rather pitiable than enviable ("... but in Spain one thousand and three," counts his valet in Mozart's opera) because he who only conquers women cannot get any real happiness out of the relationship with them. The stimulus and the quickly fleeting pleasure of success which feeds his lust of power and bolsters his ego is that which drives the lady-killer. Fully understood, he is not a rogue but a poor devil. Besides, he who concentrates all his interest on women cannot be much of a man.

This man creates a kind of circular vortex in female society. Many women chase the man who chases many women. We are inclined to wonder why. Where is the attractiveness of such a man? Experience tells us that he need not be personally attractive. What lures women to pursue him is frequently not the endowments of the man himself, but the fact that he is sought by other women. It is rather the competition with these other women, the victory over them, than the conquest of him which constitutes his seeming power of attraction.

There is a feminine counterpart of Don Juan whose satisfaction comes from possessing many men. The need of conquest in women is frequently expressed in the enjoyment of their power to make men want and desire them. For a certain type of woman the conquest of many bolsters an ego which lacks self-confidence.

In general, women do not imagine that sexual relations with many men will give them satisfaction. Most women consider promiscuity as shameful or at least as "messy." Their feeling is much more undivided than men's. They are blessed or cursed with emotional continuity. They tend to unite the claims of tenderness with those of sexual needs, needs which often are aroused only after a long and intensive interest in a man who is also interested in them.<sup>3</sup> Their fantasies, certainly not void of the same curiosity felt by

<sup>3</sup> It seems that many women are faithful in spite of themselves, that something keeps them from infidelity even when they have no conscious scruples any more. A young woman, enraged by the brutality of her husband, had decided to yield to the advances of an admirer. She went to his apartment, but as she walked up the stairs she discovered that she had become unwell.

men, revolve about such thoughts as, "What would it be like to be loved by him?" Many girls fall asleep, happily smiling at such fantasies, without any trace of conscious sexual excitement.

In psychoanalysis I have met a peculiar kind of curiosity in feminine fantasies, a curiosity expressed by the question, "What would it be like to have children by different men?" The psychological emphasis of such fantasies is, however, not on sexual promiscuity. The interest is concerned with the appearance and character of the imaginary children rather than with the men themselves. A female counterpart of the French sentence, "*Faut de mieux on couche avec sa femme*," is difficult to imagine. Generally speaking, the need for a change of sexual objects is less developed in women than in men. Except in their choice of hats, most women's tastes are abiding and conservative.

Even promiscuous men finally arrive at the conclusion that many casual relations with women are unsatisfactory. They often think, "The more, the sadder." It is even possible for men to feel sexually satisfied yet have a nostalgic desire for affection which cannot be eased by physical gratification. If we investigate the cause of such a man's dissatisfaction, we shall discover discord in the person, a lack of self-confidence. The investigator gets the impression that a wish to master this inner discontent often makes men indulge in promiscuous relations, hoping to find in variety what is missing in themselves. A certain kind of impasse confronts many young men today. They feel that casual sexual relations with several girls do not gratify their need for companionship, but they are unwilling or are afraid to give up their freedom by binding themselves to one woman. The odd arithmetic which governs the relationship of numerous young men to women is nowhere better formulated than in the telling sentence of the Viennese writer, Alfred Polgar: "Many are too little, one is too much."



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## *Psychology of Sexual Relations*

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DR. JOHNSON, when asked which was the greatest of the virtues, unhesitatingly named courage, and when Boswell asked him why, he said, "Because, sir, without courage, one will have little opportunity to practice the other virtues." This lack of courage restrains psychologists and psychoanalysts from raising some dangerous questions, the answers to which would enlighten us about an essential phase of the human situation today.

I have not raised the following questions because of any spurious wish to discuss them. They follow necessarily from the preceding chapters. I need not say that none of them are asked in a flippant or frivolous spirit. The seriousness of the situation from which they spring approaches tragedy. No questionnaire on love or sex, no search after pertinent and impertinent data is intended, but a search after the truth which conceals itself.

We enter here a region where men and angels fear to tread. There is an open conspiracy to avoid these fundamental questions. A free and critical inquiry has become necessary, even if the answers we get may be a little too close to the truth for comfort. Some things are unsayable, but some have to be said, though they are hard even to think.

Here is the first question: *Are sexual relations personal ones?*

There is more in this question than meets the eye of a peeping Tom. An explanation of what is meant is perhaps advisable. Of course, sexual relations are relations between persons, but that does not imply that they are personal. These relations manifest themselves in the intimacy of two bodies, but they need not express a lasting or even passing emotional relationship be-

tween two persons. Let me use a comparison. Before the curtain rises on a play, the spectator reads the list of the characters. Perhaps it names the members of a family—Mrs. Smith, Mr. Smith, and their daughter, Miss Smith. In previous times they were called in Latin "*dramatis personae*." Are these characters real persons? The spectator cannot know that before he has seen the play. Perhaps they are only figures without life and individuality. As far as the theatre program goes, they are persons all right; that is, they are actors who will perform the rôles of Mrs., Mr., and Miss Smith; but when the spectator listens to them and looks at them on the stage, perhaps he does not recognize them as human beings. They are not made of flesh and bone, but of paper and ink. Not even God would recognize them as men; only an angel of mercy in the form of a friendly critic would. We do not forget that the Latin word *personare* means originally "speak through a mask."

Two persons have sexual relations, but they need not necessarily be persons in our sense of the word. It is possible—and it happens every day and every night—that two individuals have sexual relations who do not know each other. The event is only a short intermezzo at a masked ball, during which neither of the two is unmasked. Two bodies unite and separate; nothing more has happened. The question of whether such a relation is personal is not only a serious one, but is full of meaning. It is hardly a question for the psychoanalysts. These superior minds will answer that what unites the two persons is the libido. But libido means the energy of the sex-drive, and crude sexual energy has no personal character. It is a power working in each human being and aroused by another human being. It might explain what makes men run, but not what makes them run to this particular woman. It needs more than libido to make sexual union a personal thing. In his melancholy dialogues *Hands Around*, Schnitzler presents the imaginary conversations of many individual couples of all levels of society before and after sexual intercourse. One of these dialogues is remarkably realistic. A soldier takes a maidservant, on her evening off, to the Prater, an amusement center in Vienna, and then—the night is dark—to the meadows beyond. When they lie down the girl says, "But, Franz, I cannot see your face at all."



The soldier, sexually excited, says, "Face—be damned." Here is the crude sex drive to which individuality is entirely unimportant and to which the private parts mean everything. Here is sex in the raw, not only unmixed with romance, but sharply separated from and contrasted with it.

In love, the person becomes the center of the universe; here the center of the body becomes the only essential thing in a person. Anonymity contrasts with personality. Raw sex means the keen edge of an urge, which wants an animal touch, a human being, in skirts or pants or without them, not a particular person. It might be one girl or another. The sex-drive is impersonal. Sex not only makes strange bedfellows but also makes bedfellows of strangers. The object can be changed in sex. In love it is not interchangeable. That is all there is to it. It is harmful to drape sex with false values. Viewing sex unrealistically is useless, even harmful.

Contemporary psychology cannot argue us into accepting sex as the essence of love and love as only a washed-out and purified form of sex. This refusal of ours has nothing to do with the valuation of the two things. What we reject is not the materialistic view but a false coinage. Grandmother called it carnal and that was funny. But we call it love, and that is ridiculous. Lying together in bed does not mean being close to each other except in a physical sense. We say, "They became lovers," when we mean that they began to have sexual relations with each other. Sex is as little "wicked" as hunger or the urge of excretion, and only very immature thinking can confuse the program of an unemotional and mechanical promiscuity with a revolution. Don Juan is a high-school boy's ideal. Youth makes a great fuss about sex, but in reality crude sex is a game not worth the candle extinguished before it. It has a levelling effect. The indiscriminate person does not care who the object is as long as he gets relief. Its exercise is almost a hygienic process. The French King Louis XV said to Level, his valet, who had to secure women for his master: "It does not matter who she is, but lead her first to the bath and to the dentist."

Not many women accept this division or separation of sex and love in their relationship with men. Their excitement is not as easily transferable. They are less inclined to consider their partner

as a purely sexual instrument, and they are sensitive to the anonymity of male sexuality, which often wants not the personal but the female, its shape and texture, limbs and ankles. There are, however, more women now than formerly who consider this separation realistically for themselves as well as for men. A patient told me the other day, "I wanted him as a man, but not him as himself."

Most women feel that "impersonal love"—I found this very phrase in a recently published book—is degrading. They differentiate between the impersonal character of sex and the personal nature of affection, not only in men but in themselves. They feel lonelier in sexual intercourse with a man they do not love than when they are alone. One of them said about her lover, "He is not a friend of mine. I enjoy him only in bed. My body says yes, but my mind says no. I hate him and I hate myself for it. I want to make him feel small. He should feel like a dog." There is a well-known anecdote about a woman who refused next day to recognize the man with whom she had slept the night before. He has not yet, she explains, been formally introduced to her. It is, however, to be supposed that a kind of projection is operating in this story: impersonality in sex relations is rather a male peculiarity. The sex-drive is like a powerful giant who is blind and who, like a prisoner, searches for an exit. The lust to conquer, and later affection, will lead him to the door. No man who has grown up in our culture can entirely forget that he suffered from sexual need during his maturing years and often later on. But no man will deny that the satisfaction of crude sexual desire is a relatively poor source of joy, a mechanical gratification of a need. The onrush of hot blood is tormentingly felt by young people. There is a time in every young man's life in which he can think of woman only in the plural.

Let us return to our question: Are sexual relations personal ones? No general answer is possible. Sexual relations may be personal or impersonal ones. It is possible that they change their character, even in regard to the same person. A married couple can have sexual relations yet be as distant from each other as the planets. "What is love but the kisses we give and take?" Indeed, it is more, or at least something else, because kisses also can have



an impersonal character. Reduced to the core, the answer to the problem is that sexual relations, considered as such, are not personal ones. They could be. Perhaps they should be, but they need not be.

There is a second question, not less surprising and in a sense the counterpart of the first: *Are sexual relations only sexual ones?* A third is closely connected with the second: *Are sexual relations friendly ones?* These two questions also have to be understood as asking whether the relations can claim to have this quality inherently and whether they always have them. The first question can easily be answered by the reader who has accepted the thesis of this book. When the persons involved are in love, sexual relations are not merely sexual; they are also expressions of tenderness, of the most intimate companionship. We know too that quite a few ego-tendencies enter invisibly into the total experience. Love itself belongs to this group of ego-drives which is not akin to the sex-urge. There are also non-sexual gratifications in sexual relations. These are easier to observe in men than in women, not only because woman "does not give away her secret," as Kant once put it, but because these other satisfactions are much more conspicuous in men. Sex is also a question of prestige with them. It is not only the opportunity to release sexual tension, but also to prove their virility, their strength. It is not only satisfaction of a physical urge, but is also the cause of emotional self-satisfaction. In sexual gratification a feeling of achievement and sometimes even of triumph is mixed, and the two emotions so overlap that it is sometimes hard to distinguish between them. Many men feel the honor and glory of sex more in this self-assertion than in the sexual satisfaction itself. It becomes clear that here is a realm in which a man can prove that he is the stronger.

But this pride transcends the physical and penetrates the mental and spiritual region. In this sense man's ambition impinges upon his affection for the love-object. Even his tenderness is tinged with this concealed quality, impregnated with this foreign element: "How could I love you, Dear, so much, loved I not Honour more." No woman would say that. The secret connection between sex and ambition goes so far with men that with many the presence or the lack of self-confidence determines not merely

his sexual potency, but his sexual potency also influences his self-confidence. I have observed many men who, having been depressed, regained their self-confidence after sexual intercourse. I have observed others who desired sexual intercourse because they felt depressed, because they thought it would help them escape from depression. Seemingly they got self-assurance from it, a bolstering of their ego. One man felt compelled to have sexual relations with his wife (from whom he was divorced because he could not get along with her) whenever he felt dissatisfied with himself on account of work or for some other reason. He had to make up for his sense of failure in this way, which gave him not only consolation but also a feeling of power. It was odd that he got almost the same effect when he masturbated with sadistic fantasies; he thus overcame his feeling of insecurity.

It seems also that the will to power, to domination, is consummated in the sexual act.<sup>1</sup> The pleasure in it is more than merely sexual. The pride of having conquered the woman, and the rebellious triumph in having done something forbidden can also have a share in it. A patient remembered precisely his feeling of astonishment mixed with this regained self-confidence after having had his first sexual experience. He was overwhelmed to find himself thinking, "Gee, you can do that to women!"

What ambition is to a man, vanity is to a woman. The pride in being desired, in meaning so much to a man, in being made the center of his wishes, and in seeing him completely in her power is certainly enjoyed by women beyond the purely sexual pleasure. It gives them a new feeling of personal worth, a new sense of their value. Many women enjoy their power over men because it makes them feel for the first time that they are man's equal. To be desired is to be attractive. Sex is thus for them not only physical satisfaction but also a fillip to their vanity. Girls often experiment with their attractiveness; they are curious to learn what feelings

<sup>1</sup> The shame of being found impotent is connected more with this power than with the sex-urge, although the field of action is clearly that of sex. It is not accidental that the word *impotence* is not restricted to sex and that it means a want of capacity, a deficiency of means to achieve an end. When a man, in bed with a woman, discovers he is impotent, he feels ashamed because of a lack of "manliness," as if he were deficient in courage and aggressiveness, as if he were a sheep in wolf's clothing. It is the same shame which is felt when a person makes a promise which he does not keep.



they can arouse in men. Their need to conquer mostly takes this form. They even use sex sometimes because they hope to reach this goal by it.<sup>2</sup> Women are never tired of hearing "I love you," but they do not take the declaration to mean "I want you sexually." In their opinion it may mean almost the opposite, namely, "I do not want you only sexually." This insistence on being the only object of affection is often expressed by women who want even the wording of compliments paid to them to be new and suggested by their personal endowments ("You say that to all girls").

There is one tendency which is foreign to women, but not to men. I refer to the use of sex relations as a means of degrading the object. I do not mean that women do not sometimes wish to humiliate men with whom they have sexual relations, but that they use different weapons. They show the obstinacy of the weak; they take their revenge by making men fail. Rarely do they feel that the sexual act itself can cause humiliation and degradation in the man. More than four hundred years ago Benvenuto Cellini wrote in his *Memoirs* about one of his models: "I lay with her to vex her and her family." Such a means of revenge would not occur to a woman. She can feel sexual relations humiliating only to herself if she yields unwillingly; but she cannot consider them degrading for the man. This view does not mean that women may not feel hostility against men; it means only that her revenge does not take the form of seduction.

The male animal can use the woman sexually without feeling any affection, but also without hostility. A woman who is used like that will always feel hostility because she feels abused and hurt in her self-respect. Offended in this way, the female of the species is deadlier than the male. Another possibility is nearer to the woman while it is remote to the imagination of men; namely, to yield to a man's advances out of pity. This possibility can become a reality especially when a woman has led a man on. Having tried her power on him in a very coquettish manner, she

<sup>2</sup> A girl once confided to me that she had believed for many years that men in general have no use for women except as sexual partners. She doubted that men want women's company for other reasons. In her opinion men were much more self-sufficient and self-contained than women. She expressed a view which many women secretly hold—against their hopes and wishes.

may yield from a sense of guilt. She may feel that her previous conduct obligates her to give in to him, not because she is sexually aroused, but because she feels responsible for his being so. Very few women get any satisfaction from such "altruistic" sexual relations.

Pity certainly does not belong in the realm of sexual urges. It springs from the soil of the ego-drives. So does another tendency—thirst for revenge—which has a place among the needs which can be satisfied in sexual relations with women. An offended or deserted woman can welcome sexual relations with another man because she wants to get even with a previous lover who has cheated or humiliated her. She wishes to spite him at least in her fantasy.

We have already talked about the part which perverted tendencies play in sexual relations. They contribute morbid ego-gratifications to sexuality. Caresses and torments can mean the same in these strange dislocations; wallowing in evil can satisfy the defiant tendencies. Stroking passes into striking, kisses into bites, and embraces into strangulations. Degradation can become a necessary condition of sexual enjoyment. A secret feeling of guilt, as well as the defiant impulses, can be satisfied in these excesses. During a psychoanalysis one man said, "If we meet in the gutter, we are in seventh heaven." Love does not care whether the fruit is forbidden or not. Perversion relishes the fruit because it is forbidden. In perversions a concealed rebellious tendency gets its sly satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> Our two questions have been answered. Sexual relations are not merely sexual; they also satisfy ego-drives, and they need not be friendly relations.

Here is the fourth question: *Are sexual relations selfish or altruistic?* When the partner is used merely as a sexual instrument, the nature of sex is, of course, purely selfish, but what if

<sup>3</sup> There is a strange lure in self-degradation which expresses itself in the choice of a sexual partner who is considered inferior or in the choice of sexual practices which are consciously or unconsciously felt to be humiliating. It seems that the main motive in these cases lies in the combination of sexual satisfaction with the need for self-punishment or self-abasement. This attitude expresses itself in actions and fantasies in which also a defiant striving has a great share. The individual who unconsciously considers sexual activity to be wicked or forbidden enjoys in these breakthroughs the power of his defiance and independence, the sense of his own sovereignty against restraining or prohibiting factors.



the partner is loved? Sex without affection begets a feeling of loneliness; sex combined with love is a source of common joy. Not only do the two bodies seem to fuse, but the souls also seem to unite. There is not a he and a she, but the indivisible emotional reality of one being. A woman said in analysis, "He slept with me. I did not take any part in it." That would have been impossible had she been in love with the man. Sex can leave two people alone; love cannot.

Whether or not sex relations are selfish or altruistic depends entirely on whether the sex act is accompanied by love. If sex and love relations coexist, the problem is nonexistent, for the enjoyment of one partner is at the same time the pleasure of the other. They are selfish and altruistic. They are both or neither one. More precisely: they are beyond such a characterization. Some years ago a Dutch physician, Dr. Theodor van der Velde, published some books about sex-life in which he recommended sexual restraint to the man, very gentle regard for the woman and permanent consideration for her and her different rôle in sexual intercourse. He is not alone in this recommendation, for numerous others have hinted that a woman needs great consideration in the sexual act itself.

Such comments sometimes give the impression that a woman, because she is a woman, enjoys sex much less than men. There is even an old tradition to the effect that women are subjected to sexual intercourse as unwilling or reluctant victims. It is a conventional lie, but, what is more important, it is a psychological lie. As a matter of fact, women are generally capable of a much profounder and more lasting enjoyment of sex than men. Their abandon, if it is complete, reaches a moment of "absence," which comes in its pleasure quality close to the fainting point, to a sensation as if all bells have begun to ring. Who has fabricated the fable that women are altruistic in sex, that they wish only to give man his pleasure and can afford to renounce their own enjoyment? Who invented the phrase, "If he has only his satisfaction . . ."? It is a fairy tale, and it is not even a beautiful fairy tale.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Many women confuse the emission of men with satisfaction, but an ejection of semen has not always the character of an orgasm in the male. Such an ejaculation can leave the man entirely unsatisfied and his urge unappeased. Emotional inhibitions, anxiety, and hostility can change the character of the male orgasm

A woman in love and sure of being loved by a man will give herself to him with her whole being. She is not handicapped by the doubt felt by many men concerning their adequacy for the task. She need not prove to herself that she will function well as a sexual being. Nothing impairs her enjoyment, when she is in love. The certainty of being loved sweeps away all doubts which might have been in her mind, and her satisfaction, unhindered by the apprehensions which assail the man, reaches into depths of her being, a fact which men do not sense. Her surrender is not less sexual because it is more than sexual. On the other hand, a man's satisfaction can remain in the sexual sphere.

He who is altruistic in sex, who always consciously renounces his own enjoyment and considers only how to give pleasure to the partner, will give satisfaction neither to the partner nor to himself. I do not speak here of the obviously necessary regard and consideration given to the woman because she is a free and equal human being with a will and with wishes of her own. Of course her body is her own, and no lover or husband can dispose of it against her will.

I speak of planned and conscious consideration for the woman as if she were of a different species, unwilling to have sex while the brute, the man, alone wants it. But are not regard and consideration for the woman a sign of love? No, if they are methodically exercised and well planned in sex they are rather the opposite. When regard and respect for the woman are implicit, they need

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from its normal explosiveness into a gentle release, can transform it from a dramatic expression into a lyrical one. Such a casual or premature ejaculation does not signify the acme of sexual enjoyment, but its anti-climax. The phenomenon of premature emission is neglected even in psychoanalytical literature and is often misunderstood. It is best compared to the situation in which a person shows a lollipop to a child, lets him lick it, and withdraws at the moment when the child wants to put it in his mouth. The "timing" of ejaculatio praecox conceals its unconscious purpose. It creates the impression of a trick played on the woman, who is left expecting satisfaction and is disappointed. If this is the effect achieved, it must also reveal one of the unconscious motives of the action, whatever may be the individual motives (resentment against the woman, guilt-feeling, etc.). It should not be overlooked that there are also psychological effects upon the man. He suffers an emotional setback, is disappointed and discouraged by his failure. He is painfully aware of it and often ashamed. If he has cheated the woman, he unconsciously has cheated himself too and often more than he cheated her.



not be thought of consciously during intercourse, for they will express themselves spontaneously.

Women are right to be suspicious of an exaggerated regard for their sexual weakness and fragility. They realize astutely that undue consideration and gentleness is an indirect confession of a man's impotence. They know or rather they sense that such over-consideration is not an expression of tenderness but a substitute for it. They are suspicious of men who are "altruistic" in sex. They know, with a wisdom which comes from their own bodies, that in going after your own pleasure you give most pleasure to your sex-partner. When women put aside the screen of modesty, they are usually more honest about their sexual needs than men. Something tells them that to always view the possible satisfaction of the other means to deprive him of his pleasure as well as of your own. Women who have retained their natural instincts are "selfish" in sex. These conclusions sound paradoxical, but they are true. Subject to the necessary limitations I have mentioned, only he who desires his own sensual satisfaction can also give satisfaction to another.

We human beings are so constructed as to retain much conscious regard for each other over a long period of time. Every psychoanalyst of long experience will confirm the fact that men who consider only their wife's satisfaction and are ready to renounce their own for a long period will end, by hating their wives. He will also insist that women who assume the same rôle will at least unconsciously become hostile to their husbands. Unusual practices in sex performed only in the interest of the partner, conscious retardation and postponement of one's own release, continued through many months, will create unconscious hostility and vindictiveness which will express themselves not only in sex, but also in other relations of a couple. We are not so constructed as to be able to sacrifice ourselves for a long time, even for someone we love. Serving food and looking on at another's eating can often whet your appetite but it never satisfies your own hunger.

Only clearly understood selfishness in sex can bring satisfaction to the partner if the partner is selfish too. To wait until the other has his or her release may occasionally be harmless, but in

the long run such conscious delay avenges itself by disrupting the emotional relationships of the two people.<sup>5</sup> Such deferment cannot be withstood without psychological harm. Sexual intercourse is a social process which is satisfactory only if both persons obtain their share of gratification. A chord is discordant or consonantal according as the sounds strive in the direction of a tonality or as they reach it. In the same way the sexual desires of a couple expressed in intercourse reach the aim of common satisfaction or fall short of it in striving for this goal. Mutual affection secures this kind of gratification in the best way, although not in the only way. Psychoanalysts deal with many men who have premature emissions in sex (*ejaculatio praecox* is the technical name) and with many women who are frigid or cannot get satisfaction because their response occurs too late. Whenever we analyze such individuals we find concealed hostility, envy and revengefulness toward the partner. The flesh is unwilling because the spirit is opposed to him. Love brings people in tune with one another, makes two hearts beat in the same rhythm. It is not true that "timing," that synchronization in sex, is a result of consideration and regard.

It is not possible to keep good time by mechanical tricks such as many physicians and sexologists prescribe. Whoever tries to reach this goal in a purely mechanical manner can at best hope to become an artisan, never an artist, in love. He must be emotionally in tune, or all effort is wasted. The sex-drive means it seriously and does not like much interference by means of tricks and cunning devices. In the realm of sex, as in so many others, the truth is: *there is no technique; there is only sincerity*. There is an invisible conductor in both persons who beats the time.<sup>6</sup> The satisfaction of the one gives the measure for the satisfaction of the

<sup>5</sup> Artificial suspense in the prelude diminishes and sometimes even abolishes the pleasure of the orgasm. The maintenance of prolonged suspense is an achievement of male willpower, so to speak, a sexual counterpart of a Yogi-exercise. The secret of sex seems to be that it should not be a task, but an enjoyment. It is not superfluous to remind modern men that the reaching of the orgasm is supposed to be a pleasure.

<sup>6</sup> Children and animals are not aware of time. Whenever we return to an animal-like form of existence, the passing of time loses its meaning for us. If man consciously measures time in sexual intercourse, he acts against the tide of nature which wants to direct him by the rise and fall of instinctive needs.



other. To play out of time means, sexually, that an emotional disturbance exists, even if only a slight one.

It is not true that the man can be fully satisfied if he achieves physical relief while the woman remains unsatisfied. This state can be valid only for the uncultured man who seeks only the release of crude sexual pressure. For all other men the satisfaction of the woman is also necessary because for both the gratification is emotional as well as physical.

Perhaps there was a time when a belief in the one-sidedness of sexual satisfaction was correct, when man was a cave man and the sex act was sadistic rape. Then the pleasure could not be called selfish because the other person was psychologically not even considered an individual. The woman was just a sexual instrument. In psychoanalysis the impression is sometimes given that we have now arrived at the opposite extreme. Now many men—and many more women—are ready to renounce their own satisfaction if they can secure gratification for the partner. But you cannot call that renunciation altruistic in a true sense because the lonely satisfaction of the partner is not felt to be complete. Out of such permanent self-sacrifice, very slowly, but very surely, grows hate. The one who always denies satisfaction to himself denies it also to the other. He who thus sins against himself may feel very noble and kind-hearted, but nature does not like smugness and self-righteousness of men in sex. She punishes these men and women who disavow their animal inheritance, who try to cheat her when they pretend that they act from the noblest motives.

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## *Imagery in Sex*

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WE HAVE SEEN that when souls understand each other the bodies also understand each other in sex. Sexual intercourse thus mirrors in their finest nuances and shades the attitude which two persons have towards each other. Mechanical factors do not decide whether lovers are attuned to each other, whether they are sexually synchronized. Not mechanics, but their emotions decide this question, and the emotions need not all be conscious. Failure and success are determined by these invisible powers in sex and in love. A part—and the most essential part—of these emotions presents itself in the imagery, in the individual forms of fantasy which govern the sex life, provided it is stimulated by something more than a crude organic pressure. We have previously met the factor of fantasy in the creation of the ego-ideal, which later on becomes replaced by the love-object. We met it again when we suggested that everybody shapes a kind of imaginary figure of himself as a person of the opposite sex.

The new idea of imagery I want to introduce also concerns the individual imagination. A comparison of the rôle which fantasy plays in sex and in hunger or thirst shows how much more important imagery is for sexual excitement. The subject merits a book in itself. I call sexual imagery the totality of fantasies or visual images which spontaneously stimulate sexual desires in a person. In many people the imagery awakens a mixture of sexual, aggressive, and tender impulses. Occasionally love works as counter force against the development of sexual images. A girl, who used to be so excited by sexual pictures that she practiced masturbation as a means of relief, complained during psychoanalysis, "The thought



of Charlie spoils that for me." When she tried to have sexual fantasies with Charlie, she did not succeed; that is, she could not feel excited. But the mental image of a Negro raping her on the roof of a house aroused very vivid sexual feelings. After some time this image lost its exciting power because whenever she called it up, the rival image of the loved one appeared and interfered with the sexual feeling. The condition of degradation connected with sex, which is so frequent in our culture, is responsible for this split in the imagery. The same girl, after kissing a soldier she scarcely knew, said, "I pretended to myself that he was Charlie." The power of imagery works here in such a way that one person may be substituted for another. In this substitution the girl could enjoy the kiss for a moment, but then she thought, "It is not right unless it comes spontaneously," and her excitement faded. Like the frames of a motion picture, images can be accelerated or slowed down and they can even be brought to a full stop in different phases; for instance, of the undressing of a woman. Many characteristics of sexual imagery such as tenacity and change, combination of scenes and persons, increase and decrease of exciting power, duration and variety, cannot be discussed here.

Very often the sexual imagery so greatly surpasses reality in such a way that the exciting power of the image makes the real situation disappointing. ("Go away and let me dream about you.") It must have been such a comparison between the unsatisfactory reality and the enchanting imagery which dictated the cynical remark of a Viennese writer, Karl Kraus, that sexual intercourse is a poor substitute for masturbation. Frequently young people try out different images until they find the one which is most satisfactory. As a matter of fact, psychologists get the clearest insight into sexual imagery from psychoanalysis of masturbation fantasies. The choice of the object in fantasies is not always a conscious one. Sometimes uncalled images present themselves. A girl, thinking of these fantasies, said during analysis, "Who will it be tonight?"

In the imagery of a person we can discover the individual conditions of his love and what specific pictures arouse sexual desires in him. We realize what importance the individual imagery has if we consider that it determines the character of a person's

love-life in its sexual and its tender expressions. When two people fall in love with each other it means that two imageries coincide. I hasten to add that only to a certain extent is a person aware of the imagery which he creates or which is created in him. A great part of it remains, in general, unconscious.

The presence and the psychological effect of sexual imagery can, however, be unconsciously felt by the partner. A patient sensed that her husband had perverted images in sexual intercourse and was so disturbed by this knowledge that she could not give herself with abandon. Another woman asked her husband, "Are you really there?" She felt that he had other fantasies while he embraced her. On the other hand, unconscious images which complement each other can intensify the sexual satisfaction of both partners. There are other remarkable features of imagery: sexual episodes which did not lead to gratification can be continued in fantasy until they end in satisfaction. Images are subjected to the same emotional disturbances as actual experiences: A young woman becomes excited as she remembers that her lover gave her endearing names and caressed her, but she "freezes up" when she remembers a remark which hurt her pride.

We shall derive better knowledge of the rôle of imagery if we try to determine what the fundamental emotional process is in the most intimate union of a loving couple. We have already said that the pleasure in it is neither selfish nor altruistic, or that it is selfish in a new sense; namely, that the self is enlarged, that it incorporates the person of the love-object as a part of oneself, as if two persons were made one. This sounds rather mystical or, if you like, poetical, but it can be translated into scientific psychological language and, if necessary, even into a very pretentious Greek or Latin terminology. In plain words, a man or a woman in love feels the sexual enjoyment of the partner as his or her own by unconsciously taking over the rôle of the other. That is to say, the man unconsciously experiences in his imagery what the woman feels in increasing excitement and satisfaction, and the woman identifies her own sensations and emotions with those of the man. Thus an unconscious process of exchange of rôles takes place while consciously the individual's own personal and sexual identity remains the same. This imaginary transformation is really



an enlargement of one's own personality in the sense that it becomes integrated with that of the beloved. The change which takes place is emotionally equivalent to the absorption of another personality into oneself, to an expansion of oneself and an increase of one's own emotional sensibility. But is not this double transference and absorption very hard to imagine?

How can a man possibly, even in a tentative way, feel what a woman experiences in sexual intercourse; and how can a woman feel what a man experiences? Is it not fantastic to assume that a person may imaginatively and unconsciously exchange emotions and sensations with an individual of the other sex? Such a change parallels the situation described in the fairy tale of a sultan who, while taking a walk, discovers that by saying "*mutabor*" (Latin for I shall change) he is transformed into a stork and can understand what the storks are saying. Why should not a passionate imagination be able to work such miracles too? The ground for such an unconscious metamorphosis of a few seconds' duration is psychologically well prepared. We have talked before about those fleeting thoughts and fancies of later childhood, in which the boys or girls imagined themselves to be of the other sex and wondered what it would feel like to be a girl or a boy. These fantasies are now unconsciously renewed in sexual relations. It can easily be recognized that the strongest motive for such a fleeting unconscious transformation is the wish to be very much desired by the sexual partner. The intense influence of the excitement of the partner on one's own sensual excitement is obvious, for the excitement corresponds to the recognition of being wanted or loved and is sometimes identical with it. And, mind you, we do not state that the fantasy of one partner necessarily mirrors the emotional reality of the other. Perhaps the man's emotions and sensations differ from those the woman imagines are his, and perhaps—more often—the woman experiences quite different sensations from those the man supposes she feels.

The coincidence of the imagery with the real emotional process in the other person is not essential, but the unconscious attempt to experience the partner's feelings is paramount. At the same time we believe that in love there is a real understanding of the other person, a kind of telepathy which enables one to think and feel

what the partner experiences. This is not the result of a conscious effort of thinking and conjecturing, but is an unconscious process of communication, comparable to wireless telegraphy or radio.

We must not forget that such communication is helped by awareness of the movements, gestures, breathing, intonations, and other details of the partner's behavior, which we unconsciously interpret as expressions of his emotions. The interplay of unconscious feelings expresses itself in the actions of love-making, which are not identical but which here coincide with sexual intercourse. The excitement of one partner stimulates the other. Here also drives from the ego-realm are absorbed in the sexual sphere. The sexual processes reflect in this case the tender emotions as if they were one, comparable to the outside and the inside of a glove. No doubt, even if there is no tenderness on either side, the unconscious emotions of the two persons understand each other, but sex can be a lonely thing for either of them.

If we have to assume that there is such an unconscious communication working in sex, a secret interplay of the drives and emotions between the two partners who understand each other as by telepathy, then another question—certainly not the final one, but of the character of finality—occurs: *Is one-sided satisfaction in sex possible and under what conditions?* We might consider this question as a continuation of the previous query as to whether sexual relations are altruistic or selfish. There is no doubt that such a one-sided satisfaction is possible. In the gratification of the crude and brutal sexual need this possibility becomes a reality. What is to be examined is only the quality of this satisfaction.

A man who rapes an unwilling woman, like the prehistoric man in Felicien Rops' picture "*La chasse de la femme*," gets his satisfaction, but even with him it is doubtful whether it is a purely sexual one. Is it not also the lure of violation which propels the male, the pleasure in breaking the female's physical and forceful resistances? This consideration brings us closer to the answer. One-sided satisfaction is only possible when the sexual action has a sadistic, cruel character. Of course even then it is possible that the partner enjoys such an experience also; that is, if she or he happens to be masochistic and shares the lust of the other by proxy. But such a combination is exceptional. The general answer to our



question is that sexual satisfaction restricted to one person is only possible when the sexual act has the marks of violence and cruelty, whether in imagery or in fact.

If we exclude these cases—and their number is negligible—we arrive at the surprising conclusion that there is no such thing as one-sided sexual satisfaction. Perhaps it would be better to call such a statement incredible or hard to believe rather than surprising, for it contradicts all we have been taught to think. Consider what this answer implies. It puts an end to the fiction that one of the partners in a sexual act can enjoy himself while the other does not. It debunks, for instance, the fable that woman can sacrifice herself, so to speak—can let the man have his pleasure while she is only physically involved. The result of her attitude is that only the physical pressure of the sex-need of the man is released or diminished; but this relief cannot be called pleasure and certainly not complete satisfaction. The act becomes only a biological function which removes an unpleasant sensation, nothing more. It is difficult for a man who has reached a certain cultural level and maturity of feeling to use a woman simply as a sexual instrument while she has no share in his sensual pleasure.

A lady made the following witty comparison: "A woman is like a fire-engine. She stands for days in the station waiting, but she must always be ready for service when a fire breaks out." Such a complaint might be justified, but the fire will not be entirely quenched if the engine does not function. In other words, the woman can be used sexually, but the result will not be very satisfactory to the man. His purely sexual needs may be somewhere appeased, a tension in him reduced, but this is psychologically not enough. It is, as a matter of fact, very little for the cultured man who has emotional needs which cannot be satisfied separately.

We return by this detour to the importance of sexual imagery. You could not seriously ask whether sexual relations are real or imaginary in their essence. They are both; that is, though they are materially real activities, they are at the same time prepared by fantasy and accompanied by it. You do not embrace only the real girl but with her the girl of many of your daydreams which were there before her. The girl is not kissed by a real and present man

only, but also by the hero or main figure of many unconscious images which perhaps did not resemble him at all but were transferred to him and synthesized in his person. We know the individual pattern after which the actual love-object is molded; namely, the ego-ideal. Complete sexual satisfaction is impossible without preparation in fantasy. (I speak here of mature persons who have reached a certain cultural level. But are the others really capable of complete satisfaction in the sense we understand it? It might be satisfactory for their needs, but these needs are very restricted or modest.)

Not only is the preparation in fantasy a necessary condition of satisfaction, but sexual relations are permanently accompanied by unconscious imagery. To a great extent suspense and release in sex depend for their character and their timing upon this succession of images, which are comparable to the waves of a subterranean stream. A lady told me once in analysis that during sexual intercourse with her husband she had a thought surprising enough at first. She used to wonder: "How many hands a man has!" While we guess at what she meant, we cannot call it a realistic thought. It certainly belongs, however, to the realm of these delicious images which accompany the sexual feelings.

What we mean goes beyond details; it concerns the general character of the emotional situation. Did we not say that the main enjoyment in sexual intercourse is not the touch of two skins but the unconscious exchange of two rôles, the secret interplay of two emotions? This new concept might be surprising, and so I shall try to illuminate its meaning by the comparison between the sender and the receiver of radio waves. The two persons are tuned in; one, let us say the woman, has turned on a certain radio station, clearly receives a message, and reacts to it. To be tuned in means to be concentrated upon this particular station and wavelength and upon it only. We understand that the restriction to this wavelength is important, because it removes all other waves and excludes interfering sounds from other stations. The reaction to the reception of the message corresponds to its content and character. We have assumed that the response in sex is founded on an unconscious identification with the other person, with the love-object. Our comparison might also illustrate the slight delay in the re-



action of the woman.<sup>1</sup> Sounds need a certain time to reach the ear and the brain, and the reactions may be slow in coming on account of many existing circumstances. The man is, so to speak, one measure ahead, as he should be, in his rôle as conductor.

The main point in the process is a mutual identification in imagination. It results in a summation, or rather in a multiplication, of one's own pleasure and the imagined or anticipated enjoyment of the partner. You cannot call this a sharing of the other's pleasure, for it is not felt as such. It is one's own delight, as if one were the other. Let me emphasize that this process is, to a great extent, unconscious; the persons remain unaware of change of rôles. If the imagery were conscious, if it were purposely planned or prepared, it would disturb or diminish the intensity of the experience. If consciously focussed, it would result in observation of the object instead of identification with self, or it would turn the fantasy into homosexual channels.

The question we started from can be answered in the light of this psychological knowledge. A one-sided sexual satisfaction is not possible because one person is unconsciously aware that the appropriate response of the other is lacking or that the reaction is of a wrong kind. The situation is, then, like the one in which a radio sender gives a message which cannot reach the receiver. He speaks clearly, but he does not get any response because other waves interfere. The mutual identification cannot take place on account of this lack of response, but as a result the enjoyment of the other person is also considerably diminished. The attempt ends as a very minor success, amounting to a failure. Who likes to speak when the other person does not listen?

Our comparison has the advantage that it illustrates the unconscious situation; it has, however, all the drawbacks of figurative language. We hope that science will discover, in the near future, what makes two persons "click" (to use an American slang expression) in their sex-relations. Perhaps it will not be psychology which finally solves the mystery. Perhaps research into inner secretions or into the currents of electricity of the brain will bring

<sup>1</sup> The comparison is not as arbitrary as it seems. A patient complained about an unsatisfactory sexual experience and about the clumsiness of the man: "It was not at all my wavelength."

information we cannot imagine now. But no matter what is discovered, it will be clear that the decisive factors determine not only the individual sex-urge but also the personality which expresses itself in sex and love.

The question remains why a sexual experience is at one time a purely physical expression and at another time reaches a deep and strong perfection. That an experience can become a complete one which calms every unrest and satisfies every want, which exactly synchronizes two rhythms, is certainly not merely a sexual manifestation, but reaches down to the core of personality. It is not true that such completion is frequent. Many men and women die without ever experiencing it.

Our comparison might be useful in illuminating the nature of many disturbances in this unconscious exchange of emotions and sensations. Such disturbances can be found in the sending as well as in the receiving stations. Fear and feelings of guilt, but especially hostility and resentment, hurt pride and lack of self-confidence are factors which can discourage or even prevent the achievement. Sexual gratification can, of course, be reached without feeling affection towards the partner. It can even be reached with the help of brutal and sadistic fantasies, but it is a conspicuous fact that sexual excitement is normally incompatible with hostility or resentment. The need of conquest, of violent aggression and possessiveness can accompany the sex-urge, but grudge and hostility defeat its purpose. They work as counter-stimuli. Men and women during psychoanalysis have often said that they would prefer to have sexual intercourse with an indifferent partner rather than have relations with their wives or husbands whom they love and with whom they have just quarrelled. Unconscious motives can counteract all conscious thoughts and impulses and annihilate their power.

The Chinese have a proverb, "The darkest place is underneath the lamp." These hidden factors are not of a sexual nature; they all belong to the group of the ego-drives. The imperious character of the sex-urge makes us overlook the fact that the emotional value of a sexual experience depends on the effect of these drives, that they decide whether it amounts only to a contact of epidermis or to more.



In this connection, as in others, it becomes obvious that the psychoanalytical misevaluation of sex, which considered love as a trick of delayed sexual desire, is a palpable mistake. What seemed at first but an overstatement appears now as a sad—and in its consequences—often as a terrible confusion. In studying the psychology of these disturbances, the analysts have concentrated their attention upon sexual factors, the character of infantile sexuality, the fixation on the first love-object, and so on. But all the emotional failures and shortcomings, impotence and frigidity, too early emission of men and too late reaction of women can be traced back to impulses of resentment and hostility, to feelings of fear and dislike. To return to our comparison, these symptoms mean: "I do not want to listen to your message" or "I do not like the way you put it." The physical inhibition is only the external manifestation of an interference, of atmospheric disturbances in the emotional sphere between two persons. What happens in sexual relations is very rarely determined by sexual factors alone. What takes place in the union of two bodies is an expression of what happens in the emotional life of the two persons,

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## *Human Dignity in Sex*

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THE NYMPH Calypso kept the wanderer Ulysses seven years on her island. At their first encounter she felt that there was strangeness between them, and she said to the King of Ithaca, "Let us go to bed to become familiar with each other." The nymph sought to use sex relations, in a manner which was familiar to Greek mentality and foreign to ours, for the purpose of overcoming the strangeness and shyness between two persons. But it is not sex alone which overcomes the abyss between her and Ulysses, but also kindness and tenderness which are expressed in Calypso's naïve invitation. It was not satisfaction of the crude sex-hunger which impelled the wanderer to stay seven years on Calypso's island.

It is not in the realm of sexuality that we must search if we want to uncover the unconscious motives of sexual failures and deficiencies, but among the personal emotions beyond this area. The Bible tells us that God created men. He created them as male and female. It is not accidental that the sex-differentiation is described in a second statement. Men are to be considered first as human beings and then as men and women.

Every sex develops a sense of its own value and dignity which is sometimes difficult for the other sex to understand. There are everyday tragedies and comedies in the battle for integrity. Many of these fights are fought in the realm of sex, although they have not their origin there.

I shall restrict myself here to some remarks on the psychology of the sexual frigidity of women. Like male impotence, like too early emission and similar phenomena, it has the character of



unconscious sabotage of the sexual partner. In analyzing frigidity, the emotional effect can again be considered the most precious cue to the hidden motives. If the result of such a failure is disappointment for the partner, this result is unconsciously wanted and wished for—in spite of all conscious good intentions. The situation can be likened to that described in the maxim that you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink.

It is not true, as the psychoanalysts assert, that sexual intimidation, the fixation on their fathers, and similar factors are the main causes of the frigidity of women. Love overcomes all, even puritanism. When a woman has no feeling during sexual intercourse, she does not love the man—at least not at that moment—or perhaps she does not think that he loves her. There is no use blinking at this psychological fact. Her reaction is not identical with hating him, not even with hostility. Often hurt pride rather than aversion causes the failure. In other words, she feels she is not respected by the man or that she does not respect him.

A woman is generally more sincere with her body than with her mind. Nobody can assert that women are inarticulate on other topics, but on this particular one they are often hindered from expressing their deep emotions.

There is a characteristic difference between the behavior of men and women emotionally in regard to sex. Let us assume there has been an argument between a man and his wife and that some harsh words were said on both sides. The man has already forgotten, if he has not forgiven, some offensive remarks made by his wife. He hopes that the sun will go down on her wrath and that then he may reconcile her by approaching her sexually. To his bitter disappointment, his attempt proves a failure not only when she refuses him, but also when she later yields to him. She remains unfeeling. The message is heard, but no response is forthcoming. She has to learn that sex cannot influence love, but that love can change sexual feelings. A woman can be pushed into sex, but she can only be led to feel affection. A man can possess her sexually, but she belongs to him only in love. The fact that the man wants the body but that the woman cannot disconnect it from the soul is not the only cause for the conflict between the sexes, but it is one of the fundamental differences which often create conflict

So sensitive is the pride of woman that she often loathes herself for yielding to the man who has offended her. Against her conscious intentions her body remains stony and her emotions sealed up, as if she would say, "I am not here except physically." A woman once said—and she expressed a feeling shared by many of her sisters, "I was angry at him because he made me give in and furious at myself for letting him do it." You hear similar descriptions of women's emotions almost daily in a psychoanalyst's consulting room. I have collected quite a few, and I shall present a selection of them here to prove how similar women's emotional reactions are: "I cannot sleep with him because I am sexually aroused, but because I am fond of him as a person. Not only does he become a stranger when I am with him against my will, I become a stranger to myself. I feel disgusted at myself when I think that I let him lie down with me. Where was my pride?" "I was not present as I —." "It was like a massage." "I would prefer to have a tooth pulled." "I felt without self-respect and dignity—lower than a worm." "I became distant suddenly, because he seemed not to be aware of me as an individual, but just as a woman he might use." "I was to him simply a service-station." "I feel as if I could never feel clean again." "He cannot do that to me. I am not one of his dance-hall girls." "I yielded to him and I hated myself for it. It made me feel cheap." "I had no respect for myself. I felt like a prostitute." "I felt dragged down and I knew I would hate myself in the morning." "I feel stripped of my last shred of self-respect." "I gave in to him, but I did not like myself after it." "He is interested in me only sexually, and not as a person. I go dead, because I feel cheap as mud." A patient told me that during sexual intercourse with her husband she thought of the details of the shopping she had to do for dinner the next day. She said later about her relations, "It was not something we did together." These are strong words, and they are not the strongest which are used with regard to this situation.

Women are suspicious when they are considered only as sexual instruments—when the man does not make love to them, but pretends to make love. They do not like to have the man think he has conquered them, but prefer to have him think they surrendered.



This preference has less concern with social disgrace than with the sense of self-value, less with face-saving and more with looking at their faces in the mirror of self-judgment. They know that sex "works" only if they feel emotionally close to a man; there is no other way to make it work with them. They want to live with a man, not merely to sleep with him.

Pascal is right in saying that the heart has its reasons of which the mind knows nothing, but he should have added that the body often realizes and reveals them. The frigidity of women proves such unconscious knowledge. Not always are the motives for the lack of excitement conscious; often desire fights with pride, but pride usually wins. Here are some instances which illustrate that women need not be aware of the motivation of their resistance and sexual restraint. A patient told me she found, to her own astonishment, that the excitement she had felt at first in sexual intercourse with her husband had suddenly stopped, although she did not know why. We discovered in analysis that she must have thought of her dislike of a visit she had to make to her parents-in-law on the next day. Her husband had persuaded her to go.

Another patient, a young girl whose fiancé had just returned from a business trip of several months, wondered why she was entirely frigid for the first time, although she had felt vivid longing for him during his absence. Here is the motivation, secret to herself: She had put her dress negligently on a chair when she undressed. The young man picked it up and, while laying it out neatly, made the half-joking remark that ladies' dresses should be so arranged. The girl said, teasingly, "Well done, Mr. Experienced." It was not difficult to discover that this remark gave the cue to her unfeeling attitude some minutes later. She must have unconsciously thought that the man had learned to deal with ladies' dresses on his trip; he must have had other "experiences."

Another patient remembered suddenly that her husband had shown no sympathy with her when she had been ill, and this thought left her suddenly frozen. "One moment he feels tenderly towards me, and the next he does not care how miserable I am if he can only have his will." Another girl, having gone to bed with her lover, had to get up to fetch something. When her feet

touched the ground she made the half-serious remark, "If you want to be really attentive you would provide slippers, number six, for me." The man said, jokingly, "In this case I would have to provide quite a few slippers, number five and seven and several other sizes." The girl was, to her astonishment, entirely frigid in the sexual intercourse which took place half an hour later.

In this often unconscious way women protest against lack of respect or consideration and express their view that they do not want to be treated merely as a piece of flesh. Their resistance is not directed against sex, but against sex without regard or affection. Their unresponsiveness reveals their emotional reaction. The clash of wills between the sexes is carried over into the realm of sexual relations. Many problems of sexual incompatibility can be solved if the analyst approaches them as possible manifestations of unconscious resentment and hurt pride.

The man is not insensitive to the reaction or rather to the lack of reaction on the part of the woman. He feels slightly depressed and is aware that he has failed. This realization may not always be conscious, but it is always the emotional result. Sometimes he merely feels out of tune with his partner, but unconsciously he interprets this dissonance as an expression of a psychical divergency. If what I suppose is true, namely, that both persons understand each other unconsciously, then he will sense the hostile or at least rejecting meaning of the symptom. I dare to go further. Even when he is consciously puzzled by it, he will understand it as revenge or resentment for a hurt he has inflicted on his partner's self-esteem. This statement is supported by the fact that the partner's lack of sexual response is a blow to his own masculine pride, as if her conduct implied a failure of his virility, of his sexual potency.

He understands unconsciously that this punishment corresponds to the crime. If his dignity as a man suffers under the failure, it must be that he had offended the human dignity of his wife or sweetheart. Can we then still maintain that women never use sexual relations as a means to express their negative or aggressive feelings? We have not made such an assertion, but have merely stated that they do not consider the sexual act in itself to



be degrading for the man. Their revenge is much more subtle than the mental cruelty of man. Because they have been offended as women they attack his most tender spot, his pride as a man. They know unconsciously that there is no one-sided sexual satisfaction in spite of their conscious belief that the man can enjoy himself even if they do not take part emotionally in sexual relations. Is it necessary to add that I am far from considering women as angels? There are enough domineering and cruel women who are not satisfied with being the mistress of a man but want to be his master and want to reduce him. Ruthlessness is not restricted to the male. Congreve is right: "Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury, like a woman scorned."

Women express their hurt pride, sexually, in either of two directions—against the man or against themselves in a masochistic self-abasement. They want to degrade either the man or themselves, as if they had identified themselves with the man, had taken him into their being. The second alternative often results in unfaithfulness or promiscuity. They act as if they no longer value themselves because the beloved man did not care for them, as if they no longer were afraid of becoming "cheap" because he thought them valueless anyhow. One of them said bitterly after the man had deserted her for another woman and she had become promiscuous, "After what he did to me it did not matter whether it was one man or another." Sometimes the promiscuity of a woman appears to be nothing but a measure of revenge, a kind of retaliation for and a bitter caricature of the man's attitude, as if she meant to say, "Look, that is what you did and what I learned from you." Defiance and mockery, as well as vindictiveness, are with such women very frequently unconscious. The emotional connection with the memory of the hurt pride is interrupted as if remembrance were too painful.

Let me for another moment return to the statement that, with the exception of sadism, there is no one-sided sexual satisfaction; but now I shall use it in defense of men. The man who has grown up in our culture is but rarely satisfied with crude sex, in spite of all his boasting. He is not as insensitive as women often imagine him—at least he is not as insensitive and unfeeling in his uncon-

scious mind—even if he often pretends to himself that he needs sexual release only and not companionship too. He is basically a romantic, and he also feels that the bodies remain alien to each other if the souls do not unite. He may deceive himself for a time, but he cannot deceive himself forever. He may whistle a bawdy song in the dark of his emotional aloneness, but he knows somewhere deep within that sex relations alone will not satisfy him. Did he not invent the fable that every animal is sad after intercourse (*"omne animal post coitum triste"*)? He must know that it is not true, because he, the male animal, feels depressed only if he cannot get complete satisfaction. And he cannot get complete satisfaction if sex and sympathy are separated from each other—unless he is simply a male animal.

There is also something in him which searches for affection and is disappointed if he finds only sex. Physical release may mean more to him than to woman, but it certainly does not mean all. The aftermath of sex relations sometimes finds him not sex-hungry any more, but hungry for affection. He can feel lonely, too, in the union of his body with a female body. He knows that every sexual experience is different, and that few are perfect. Perhaps he does not know this lesson as well as women do, but he knows it as well as they have been able to teach it to him. Men are well able to feel the contrast between the anonymous urge for sexual satisfaction and the need and desire for a certain person. This contrast may be obliterated momentarily by the excitement of the sex act, but it often returns immediately after the orgasm. During analysis a man thus described a sexual experience: "The drive was strong, but the desire was weak," and he continued: "If so much pleasure could be gained with a person who is indifferent to you, how much more would sex mean with a woman you care for." Men have learned to long for the rising climactic sequence which begins with the suspense created by woman's restraint, and then leads to her yielding, to her yearning, and finally to her abandoning herself to ecstasy. These successive stages have become aims breathlessly wished for. By this long road we arrive again at the psychological conclusion that sexual relations reach complete satisfaction only if they satisfy in a single act the sex-urge



and the ego-needs, among them the youngest want, which we call affection. This revelation cannot be called sensational. It is, however, one more of the things in heaven and earth that are dreamed of in our psychology.

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## *The Desire To Be Desired*

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EVEN AN originally revolutionary movement like psychoanalysis can become conservative and can take refuge, at last, in reactionary acquiescence. Many revolutionary minds, fighters of yesterday, are tired and now rest their cause on dogmas and preconceived ideas. The progress of science does not tolerate such refuge. The shape of psychoanalysis around the year 2000 of our era will be very different from the concept of the New York Psychoanalytical Society of 1945. No prophetic gift is needed to predict that it will be much more occupied with the total human personality than with the sexual components. The picture of psychoanalysis in the year 2000 will, I am sure, be nearer to that which neo-psychoanalysis sketches than to that of the libido theory. It will be recognized then that the crude sex-drive cannot have the power attributed to it by Freud and that early mixtures of sexual and non-sexual urges are clearly to be observed in those very phenomena which impress us as "purely" sexual.

I admire Freud as much as any of his followers and perhaps more than most of them, yet I see his greatness as based not on the libido theory but on other achievements. I am tied to him, but I am not in bondage to him. My admiration does not prevent me from seeing the need for changes, and does not bind me to a fanatical creed like that of many psychoanalysts, "Libido is libido, and Freud is its prophet."

Precisely in those persons in whom sexuality stands in the foreground and seems to govern the emotional life, it is never the primitive sex-drive alone which determines the fantasies and actions of the individual. The man who rapes and kills a woman in a



rapture is not impelled by sex alone. The insatiable lust of the male, satyriasis, and the same compulsive desire of women, nymphomania, are never purely sexual phenomena.

It is not necessary to examine pathological cases to attain insight into the nature of the strange mixture which we often call sex without discriminating between the different drives. Psychological analysis of the normal sex-life of men and women proves the theory that there is more than sex in sexual acts and fantasies. It proves, further, that this "more" which is present in sex relations frequently determines what the character of the individual sexual act is, whether it is satisfactory or not, what place it has in the emotional life of the individual.

Every research into the development of sex-life, if the investigation is undertaken without preconceived ideas, will arrive at the astonishing fact that at a certain point a new factor enters upon the scene and gains in significance. I refer to the response of the partner. More men and more women feel that the most important part of making love is arousing love. When we consider the crude sex-drive, the urge to get rid of an organic tension—what has this irrepressible drive to do with the reaction of the object? This object of the primary urge is only an instrument of pleasure and is scarcely considered as a personality. How can we account for the increasing importance of the response of this object if we assume that only the sexual tension is released in the act? To a person under the tension of the sex-urge the attitude of the object is a matter of indifference; the emotions and feelings of the woman who is used solely for the gratification of the sex-drive are not considered as long as she does not reject the man. The man, driven by such a desire, would be annoyed or angry if rejected and would use violence to achieve his aim. It is a long way from the image of a woman whose resistance is broken, and who is exhausted by her efforts to repel the attacker, to that of a woman who welcomes the man.

This great change deserves a place in the history of the development which leads from the satisfaction of the crude sex-drive to the craving we call love. The new need for response did not appear at first as an altruistic want; its aim is an increase and intensification of one's own enjoyment. The response of the

woman was welcomed, at first, merely as a surprising event. It was later sought as a source of added pleasure. The successive steps in this change proceed from the reluctance of the woman to her willingness and finally to her longing. For the primitive man, sex-appeal was really only the appeal of the sexually different. Later on, sex-appeal became an expression which promised heightened sexual pleasure for the man. Appearance and attitude, gestures and behavior of the woman seemed to promise that she would respond willingly and sometimes even passionately to the sexual approach of the man whom she would choose. The promise of greater sexual satisfaction changed its character into a *promesse de bonheur*.

By and by the response of the partner, as well as the reaching of one's own physical satisfaction, became an emotional aim. Finally it became a condition necessary for a deeper gratification, and with this development the response became for many an emotional necessity, a *conditio sine qua non*. Here is the line of demarcation which marks the transition from a purely physical act, which uses a person as an instrument of pleasure, to an act of two persons in search of common enjoyment, from a selfish activity to a social one. What used to be done to another person became a co-operative experience. The sexual act in this phase of development reached beyond the significance of shared pleasure and became a physical expression of affection. In this last transformation it removes the frontiers of fear, mistrust, and hostility which separated the sexes, the individual man and woman.

The man, who was once an intruder and was viewed as one by the woman, is now welcomed as a guest and as a friend. What he was ready to conquer because it was withheld from him is now presented to him as a gift. What he wanted to take is now jubilantly offered to him. The hands which rejected him are stretched out to him, and homage is paid to him where he found reluctance and resistance before. Such is the emotional significance of the response.

I wish to pose a problem, not even perceived by psychologists, which can only be stated here, not solved. How did this new need, the desire to be desired, originate? Why did it gain increased importance beside the elementary drive for sexual satisfaction? It is



obvious that this new wish is intimately connected with the imagery discussed before. To approach the problem we must return to the rôle which imagination plays in sexual satisfaction. The character of this gratification depends to a great extent on the kind of imagery which precedes and accompanies the sexual act.

But is not the pent-up sexual need, the libido, the most important factor in this satisfaction? No doubt, but there are others which also require to be considered. Let me use a comparison. Men drink because they are thirsty. Do men drink only because they are thirsty? Certainly not. They also drink because they feel lonely, depressed, and frustrated—because they want stimulation and companionship. While thirst remains the chief motive for drinking, it is not the only one. Similarly, it is not the sexual pressure alone which drives women and men to sexual activity. Loneliness and vanity, failure and frustration, hurt pride and despair find consolation in the fleeting satisfaction of sexual activity. A child need not be hungry when he wants a lollipop. The yearning to be desired, which did not play any part in the elementary sex-drive but which has increased its urgency in our time, shows another factor operating in conjunction with sexual appetite.

Paradoxically enough, the rôle of this need cannot be observed as well in the psychology of the normal sex-act as in the imagery of perversions and of masturbation. This association has nothing to do with the greater intensity of the need, but with the more favorable possibilities of observation. It is obvious that also in normal sexual excitement the conviction that one is desired intensifies the sexual appetite, increases one's own desire. The reaction of the partner functions as a stimulus, the intensity of which varies, of course, with different individuals, but which is always instrumental in the attainment of satisfaction.

Psychoanalytical observation proves that this reaction is anticipated in the imagery which precedes sexual activity and is enjoyed during it. The import of this response becomes clear when sexual experiences in which it was felt are compared with others in which it was missed. The man or the woman who has been frustrated returns in imagination to previous sexual relations which were more satisfactory. Sometimes they are even memories of experi-

ences with the same partner. It is not unlikely that reminiscences of this kind have an influence upon the maintenance of sexual loyalty in the sense that they are felt as promises of future satisfaction. On the other hand, the lack of response is felt as rejection, even if the partner is willing to have sexual intercourse.

What has been said in this general survey of the psychology of reaction may be illustrated by a few instances taken from psychoanalytical observation. A young man broke off an affair with a girl whom he despised, and entered into a relationship with another. In sexual relations with the second girl he felt unsatisfied, and he found to his surprise that his imagery always reverted to the mistress he had left. Although consciously he does not long for her and prefers the second to the first, his fantasy is filled with recollections of sexual experiences with his previous sweetheart. With the aid of his present girl, who was very willing to co-operate, he tried to re-enact these remembered scenes, but he discovered that when two do the same thing it is still not the same thing. He had to admit in psychoanalysis that the second girl was preferable as far as appearance and character go, but her superiority did not prevent the recurrence of the images which circled around his previous object. What he missed in the second girl was a certain personal response which the first one showed. This memory brought up the same gestures and words, certain caresses, and even certain intonations of sighing and speaking, which had whetted his desire during sexual activities. He tried in vain to imagine that the second girl was the first; he even trained her to speak the same words, make the same movements. He could not connect the same images with her. Unconsciously he must have felt that the personal response of his first mistress meant that she enjoyed sexual intercourse with him more than or in a different manner from the second. In her response the first more nearly fulfilled the conditions necessary to arouse his passion. She gratified his desire to be desired.<sup>1</sup>

If only the crude sex-drive were concerned, merely the urgent need to get rid of an organic pressure, we could not explain why

<sup>1</sup> This difference of woman's attitude is best expressed in the distinction which a young lady in Oxford, Mississippi, offered William Faulkner: "If I like 'em, I lets 'em. If I love 'em, I helps."



the urge was not satisfied as well with the second girl or why the failure to attain satisfaction with her revived memories of past sexual experiences and why the memories maintained their tenaciously exciting power in the man's imagery. Why should special movements, words and gestures of the previous sex-partner be vividly and excitedly called to mind, and why should the comparison between the two experiences recur? Why should the actual sexual experience with the second girl pale when compared with the remembered one?

We speak of sexual satisfaction as if it were an indiscriminating experience which is the same at all times and with every partner, but that assumption is valid only in the realm of the primitive sex-drive. Wherever other factors are united with sex, the following question is valid: How satisfactory is the satisfaction? There are not only degrees but also nuances and differences in the quality of the satisfaction which elude psychological description. The physical experience is also determined by what goes on in the mind, especially in the form of the imagery connected with the particular partner. A personal factor, often unknown or at least unrecognized, causes one to discriminate between experiences which have sex relations as their only common element.

A second instance, chosen for its normality, proves the psychological importance of the personal factor in an even more astonishing manner. A man had a quarrel with his wife shortly before going to bed. He could not fall asleep and felt a vague sexual urge. He tried in vain to connect this need with his wife, who lay beside him. He knew, of course, that no sexual approach was possible because his wife had been greatly annoyed with him. Besides, he himself felt no sexual desire for her at the moment. In search of images appropriate to his desire he remembered certain sexual occurrences in their past life, especially in the first year of their marriage, and became very much excited. He remembered especially having sexual intercourse during the summer time in a forest. He became aroused by remembering her excitement then, how she had pressed herself against his body, what she had said, and so on. He knew that he could not at the moment have satisfactory intercourse with his wife, who then lay beside him, but he masturbated with the image of her as he had possessed her

in the past. He replaced the actual person who was present with the picture of her when she appeared desirable and especially when she desired him. He happened to look at her while he masturbated and his excitement ebbed away, but it returned when he vividly remembered again the past experience.

An example like the one last mentioned is by no means a rare occurrence.<sup>2</sup> A psychoanalyst often hears men report that they felt unsatisfied during or immediately after sexual intercourse and that they masturbated soon afterwards, stimulated by images of their own. Sexual excitement was aroused by intercourse with the wife, but this did not gratify the desire, nor could the emission quiet it. The psychologist guesses—and this guess has been proved correct in many cases—that the man could not reach full satisfaction because moral or aesthetic scruples did not permit him to demand from his wife certain sexual practices (for instance, perverted ones) and that the act failed to satisfy him because these concealed conditions were not fulfilled. There are, however, other cases in which the woman's response is missed or is felt to be unsatisfactory. The images which are evoked in masturbation represent a situation in which the necessary conditions are realized.

It is not as strange as it seems at first sight that the import of response in sex can best be appreciated in analytical research into the fantasies of masturbation. More favorable conditions for observation are secured here by the fact that the special traits of fantasies can be isolated. The very material absence of the sexual partner necessitates an imagined substitute for her. What the imagination calls forth is, of course, just those scenes, attitudes, words which are most desired. It is notable, further, that the imagery of masturbation frequently evokes memories of real sexual experiences, and it is characteristic that the sexual excitement in them increases when the tender or passionate response of the partner is recalled.

It is true that fantasies accompanying masturbation often occur before the person has had any real sexual intercourse, but

<sup>2</sup> While cruelty and even bloodthirst directed toward the object do not exclude sexual excitement—in the perversions they often function even as exciting factors—hostility, resentment and grudges prevent the development of desire. Even in the rare cases where this rule gives place to exceptions the suppressed counter-currents interfere with satisfaction.



even when the idea precedes the experience, the desire for response plays a considerable rôle if the daydreamer is not too immature. One man often returns in his memories to a particular experience which occurred ten years ago and which always excites him. When he was a boy of sixteen his parents had to make a trip and left him at home alone with a servant-girl many years older than he. Once, when he came home late at night, the girl called him from her room. He found her undressed and in bed; she embraced and kissed him and pulled him down on the bed. In his images this scene is elaborated with all the details he remembers. He hears her calling him "my darling boy" and feels her kissing him incessantly and pressing him to her body. His excitement increases when he recalls that she herself took out his penis and inserted it into her vagina. He imagines that he feels again her passionate movements afterwards, that again her whole body trembles, that she groans and sighs and clings with her legs twined around him. He imagines that he hears her voice saying, "My sweetheart!" "Oh, that is good!" and "Come! Come!" When he imagines her tenderness and her passionate abandon, he experiences a very satisfactory emission.

I consider it necessary to report this fantasy in all its specific detail precisely because the accidental and seemingly insignificant details are important for the psychological understanding of such fantasies. Persons who are easily shocked, and who wish to have such revealing material suppressed, pay for the maintenance of their "innocence" with a lack of understanding. Important factors in such a fantasy are the double rôle played by the man, who acts both his own part and that of the missing woman; the significance of the words (sighs, interjections) as a stimulus; and the increase of the desire through being desired.

If the importance of response has been established in these instances from the sexual life of men, its rôle as an essential factor for women is obvious enough, because sexual desire of the man is generally a necessary presupposition for the sexual wishes of the woman. The imagery of woman is certainly not less vivid than that of man, but its psychological premise is usually the thought that one or many men desire her.

Freud once wrote that the libido is masculine in character, even

when found in women. It seems to me that such a statement is erroneous. If it were true, women as a sex would be unable to feel sexual desire. The nucleus of truth in Freud's assertion is the fact that the aggressiveness in the sex-drive is masculine, even when found in women. That is to say, in most women aggressiveness is less developed than it is in men. I am inclined to assume that this lack is founded less on psychological than on biological factors.

With these considerations in mind we shall easily understand that in the imagery of women the unconscious or conscious identification with the man who woos and desires her becomes a necessity if she is to feel sexually aroused. The imagery of women is governed by the following formula: He feels attracted to me, he desires me, he loves me. There is no other way for their imagination to present this crescendo but by taking over the man's rôle in their fantasies. While the assuming of the double rôle can be missing from the fantasies of men, it can scarcely be absent in the imagery of women. The passive or better the expectant character of feminine sexuality is not solely responsible for this difference. Psychological factors which are determined by our pattern of culture also operate on her. While the woman's increasing sexual excitement, her yielding and abandon are a most pleasant addition to the man's physical satisfaction, sufficient excitement and activity on his part are a necessary premise for the arousing of the woman's desire. A woman can have many doubts as to her attractiveness, but very few women can doubt their ability to raise a man to potency. (Men are certainly not as sure of their power to arouse a woman sexually as women are of theirs.)

This psychological difference, with its physiological repercussions, explains why in the imagery of women the sexual reaction of men to their attractiveness stands as a self-understood premise. Without it, sexual excitement would not develop or would soon stop.<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, the imagery of women starts with the fantasy that a man feels attracted to them, woos, courts, and desires them. He speaks sweet and flattering words, calls them en-

<sup>3</sup> In some fantasies of women this male reaction is delayed, but that does not contradict the above statement, because it means only that the suspense is enjoyed and the power of conquering the reluctant man appears in an even clearer light. The factor of suspense in sex is discussed in the writer's book, *Masochism in Modern Man*, Farrar & Rinehart, 1942.



dearing names, kisses them, and approaches them sexually. The fantasy often does not reach this sexual phase. A girl describes the image she prefers thus: "I pretend that I am a man and I say to me: 'I love you, I love you, I love you.' That is not supposed to excite me sexually but to break my resistance down." In the imagery of men the sexual approach is much more immediate; tenderness is used only as a means to make women ready for sex relations. In general the affection of the man appears as a pre-supposition in the fantasies of women, whereas the tenderness and abandon of the woman is a final result in the fantasies of men, in correspondence with the passively expectant and the dynamically active characters of the two sexes.

If a woman wants to enjoy a purely sexual fantasy, she has to play the rôle of the man or the boy who approaches her sexually. She has to imagine that she is this man and has to experience his excitement. Most women feel like a girl who said during psychoanalysis, "Of course I want sex; but I also want more than sex." In acting the double rôle of the active and desirous man and herself, she has to imagine that she is the man who gets excited so that she can enjoy the increasing passion of the man, her own resistance, and her final yielding. Girls often postpone their consent, in their imagery, because they are afraid that a too ready giving in would be misinterpreted by the man. ("What will he think of me? Perhaps he thinks I am fast.") The character of this acting of a double rôle is quite obvious when the woman not only imagines but in a sense acts out the man's movements, gestures, and sexual actions. At the end the man's emotions and those of the day-dreamer are fused. A girl described this phase in psychoanalysis with the words: "I do not know any more who is feeling what."

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## *Response*

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THE CONTRAST between the imagery of women, in which the sexual excitement of the man is a necessary precondition of their own desire, and that of men, in whose fantasies the abandon of the woman is a reward, leads to some interesting questions. For lack of courage they have not been posed in psychological research, and therefore we have not heard them before; but the fact that they have not emerged does not mean that they are not relevant. There has never been any doubt that a person can remain cold and unexcited when another becomes sexually aroused and approaches the first person. Many instances, especially of women's having rejected men who solicited them, confirm this fact.

Here is a psychologically interesting question: can a man excite a woman sexually, observe all the signs of her desire, yet not become excited himself? How far does such a possibility exist for a woman? The difference between this and the sexual approach of an undesirable male is clear. The man wishes to excite the woman and purposely arouse her desire. The answer to this question promises information concerning the rôle of the sexual response. This answer is that a man can voluntarily excite a woman sexually without being excited himself. The possibility exists, but it rarely materializes. There are, for instance, sadistic types who can observe all the signs of the excitement which they have themselves provoked, but who do not feel any trace of sexual desire.

If we exclude these pathological cases, our answer remains yes, but with great restrictions; for a normal person can practice such conscious indifference only for a short time or only through the utmost exertion of his will power. It is possible to keep up



such an emotional "isolationist" attitude, but only by great self-control. Moreover, it can be maintained only as long as this force of will lasts. But if this conclusion is correct, then the excitement of the other person works as a strong stimulus, against which a powerful resistance is necessary. Why should resistance be necessary, if one's own desire is only an expression of an elementary sexual drive, a crude urge to get rid of an organic pressure?

Here is a kind of indirect, so to speak experimental proof that there is more than the plain organic sex-drive in the desire which pulls a man to a woman or a woman to a man. It is not merely the primitive sexual drive which operates, but a twin drive in the individual. The effect of the stimulation of the woman reacts upon the man who has excited her. It is as if the person who attempts to set his neighbor's house afire burns himself, too. Otherwise, we could not explain why the sensual stimulation communicates itself to the provoker. In the act of exciting the woman he enjoys both his power to arouse her and his desire to conquer her. There may be other drives operating from the sphere of the ego, but certainly it is not the raw, elementary sex-drive which brings about this result. Evidence of this kind leaves no doubt about the psychological importance of sexual response. Even when the woman is excited by some mechanical means which the man applies, his observation of her sexual desire will arouse excitement in him.

If it is permissible to enlarge the meaning of the word "response" to include that of *reaction*, then certain perverted practices confirm our argument. Self-observations of homosexual, sadistic and masochistic persons leave no doubt that the excitement of the partner is a highly appreciated factor in their own satisfaction. As in normal sexual life, the awareness and even more the direct observation of the response add considerably to excitement. In some persons it not only whets the appetite but also awakens it. Similarly a person may not be aware that he is hungry until he sees another eat with great enjoyment.

Especially in perverted activities in which humiliation and degradation or self-abasement play decisive rôles does the one person enjoy observing the response of the other. Such lustful observation contributes another satisfaction from the source of the power-drive to the purely sexual pleasure. The conquest of the

other, the sense of one's power, also the shame visited upon the other or the shamelessness of the other are factors in the quality and intensity of this perverted enjoyment. In the masochistic perversion this gratification is reached by self-identification of the passive with the active partner.

That the unconscious identification with the responding partner is the essential moment in the dynamic process will become clear when we now turn to the psychology of women. It can easily be shown that women in general have a better chance than men of remaining uninvolved emotionally by sexual excitement, even if the women themselves have provoked it. The spectacle of men aroused by women is more common than that of women similarly excited by men. But, like men, only by exercising great will power, can women calmly observe in a man excitement which they themselves have voluntarily aroused. Very frequently women may have a delayed reaction, but they finally show the same one as men. Here is a convincing instance. A young girl came into psychoanalysis because she suffered depressions, difficulties in her work, and many hysterical symptoms. The most conspicuous trait in her case history was a compulsive masturbation, an act she performed daily and sometimes several times a day. Masturbation so extreme is rather rare with young girls who have never had sexual intercourse and who have been brought up on a certain cultural level. My patient, who belonged to a Catholic family with severe principles of conduct in sex, felt ashamed and guilty because she had to yield to the temptation almost daily.

The first impression gained through analysis was that she became excited on occasional "petting" parties with young men and that this stimulation led to masturbatory activities. This impression, however, proved incorrect because she also masturbated when she did not meet these young men and because the images which aroused her sexually had nothing to do with them. It soon became clear that her self-excitement had started some years before, after she had broken off her relationship with the young man who had been her steady friend for a long time.

This relationship had a strange history. She had dated this boy for some time before she found that she was in love with him. There were some "necking" parties, confined to kissing and



hugging. She wished to marry the man; and, so she said, in order to make him wish to marry her, she often kissed him passionately. She was not unaware that she was sexually excited by these caresses but she never allowed him to touch her body. After more than a year he declared that he could not see her any more because, as he told her, he "got so hot that he could hardly stand it." She begged him, "Please do not go away." She felt deeply hurt. She soon tried to meet him again, and after a few months of suspense the relationship was renewed. She asked him not to neck so much because she could never give in to him.<sup>1</sup> Mother had taught her that she should never allow a man to touch her because "he will lose all respect for you." Soon the two young persons arrived at the same stage they had reached before. The young man demanded sexual satisfaction; but the girl, although she was afraid he would leave her for good, rejected him. In a desperate effort to hold him she decided to give him sexual release without becoming physically or emotionally involved herself.<sup>2</sup> She masturbated him whenever he demanded it and he wanted it daily and often several times a day. The girl gave in reluctantly to this practice, but continued to insist that he must not touch her. ("What would he think of me!") This one-sided sexual activity was continued for some months, during which the girl became more and more disgusted. She felt guilty also because she feared that the man would be hurt by such excessive sexual activity. She often pleaded with him, "Let's not do it again," but he persisted in and even increased his demands. The patient became very "nervous" and discouraged, especially because all courtship on his side had disappeared and "he ignored me as a person and wanted only sex." She finally broke off the relationship and went to another city.

<sup>1</sup> Necking is less enjoyed by girls than might be expected. Also, for women sexual excitement without fulfillment is unpleasant. R. S. and Helen M. Lynd found in *Middletown* (New York, 1929) that "most girls allow petting not because they enjoy it but because they are afraid they will be unpopular if they refuse." A girl in psychoanalysis complained about the unsatisfactory nature of petting, "I do not like it. It is hot and sticky and makes you feel restless. If I go so far, I want to go further, and I can't." There is no doubt that necking continued for a long time, especially "heavy petting" ("*tout excepté ça*," say the French) is emotionally harmful because it arouses sexual wishes which remain frustrated.

<sup>2</sup> Women often use sex as a way of winning the affection of men and more often of holding them. A girl said, "When you make yourself difficult, you might find that they leave you alone."

Shortly afterwards she started to masturbate and had to yield to the temptation more and more frequently in spite of her deep feelings of shame.

Her imagery left no doubt about the most essential trait of her compulsion: she identified herself with this man. In the accompanying fantasies she did not masturbate as a girl, but as a boy. She was continuing to excite him, in her imagery, but she also played his rôle. At the same time she unconsciously reversed the rôles in her fantasies; she imagined what she would feel if the man did to her what she had done to him. She managed thus to unite in her own person two individuals. It was also remarkable that in her masturbation she regularly reached a deep vaginal orgasm.

Of course she must have felt excited herself when she actively helped the man to relieve his sexual tension, although she did not allow herself to feel the stimulation consciously. She had firmly determined not to get involved, to keep her self-control. She succeeded for the time being, but she failed later on. Through her compulsive masturbation she retrieved what she had not consciously felt before; she also felt what the man must have experienced.

The sexual nature of her masturbation can, of course, not be doubted. Nevertheless, it is not only sex which motivated this compulsion. She felt unconsciously guilty of having tormented the man by first exciting him and then refusing herself to him. Her depressions, her fears that she might make herself ill by excessive masturbation, her hysterical symptoms reflect also hostile and competitive tendencies which were directed against the man. The sadistic traits which she had shown against him were now turned against herself. In this case of delayed response the rôle of identification with the man whose "insatiable" sexual desires she imitated is clear enough.

Insight into cases like this one confirms the view that for women also great sacrifices are necessary if they want to remain cool and unexcited while they excite a man sexually. I have until now seen no case, except those already mentioned, which contradicts this opinion. Apparently no one who voluntarily arouses another person sexually for any length of time can stay unmoved



himself. The unconscious identification of the exciter with the excited person has apparently greater emotional power<sup>3</sup> than we gave it credit for before.

The unconscious power of the response of the partner represents a new element in the dynamics of sex. The cave man wanted satisfaction of the pressing sex-urge alone. He did not give a damn what the woman felt. For the cultured man of our time the woman's response has become an emotional necessity. Its absence impairs his own sexual and emotional satisfaction. We are led to the conclusion that some psychological changes, the nature of which we do not know, awakened this new need.

If I dare to guess at least in what direction we have to search for these concealed factors, my temerity can be excused only by the absence of any other clue. I think that a change in the self-confidence of men may perhaps have been the most important factor. Modern man unconsciously seems to doubt that he is attractive; he even thinks sometimes that his body is ugly or repulsive. Such self-doubt has to be overcome to a certain extent if a sexual approach to a woman is to be made, but it can linger much longer at a deeper level. For the time being at least, the emotional response of the woman sweeps away this doubt. The desire to be desired started, it seems to me, with the doubt that one was desirable, and the doubt can end only with the clear manifestation of the response which proves that the man satisfies the wishes and desires of the woman. In many cases her abandon amounts to taking possession of the man whom the woman binds by her surrender. The secret of this victory resides in the fact that the woman satisfies the man's sense of power and confers upon him the triumph of virility. Wives often complain that their unfaithful husbands seek satisfaction in the arms of less valuable women. Many of these wives have never experienced an orgasm and have thus unconsciously deprived their husbands of the ego-satisfaction which is inseparable from deep sexual gratification. Man often seeks this satisfaction, so necessary to them, with inferior objects.

At a higher level the urge to be loved reflects the same doubts.

<sup>3</sup> A patient who reported to me the smatterings of images before falling asleep said, "I make up stories about Charlie to suit myself. I say to myself the things I wish he would say to me, but I would not feel this way if he did not feel this way about me."

We all must sometimes seriously doubt whether we are lovable. Beneath our clothes we are all naked, and we have reasons to believe that our naked bodies are not attractive. We know their shortcomings, the hidden weak or ugly spots. But we are also naked beneath the masks we put on before others and ourselves. We know unconsciously not only that we are noble but also that we are mean, not only kind but also cruel; and we unconsciously know a lot of unpleasant truths about ourselves. Our self-confidence is diminished by our hidden feeling of guilt, and this justifies our doubts that we are lovable. When we reach out for love; when we want to be liked, appreciated, and welcomed, we do so chiefly because to be loved means to be pardoned for our unconscious faults and inadequacies, for misdeeds and crimes committed in our thoughts.

To be loved is to have recognized value, to be forgiven, to belong. The desire to be wanted is one of the strongest of the emotional needs which accompany us through life. Being liked, being wanted, alleviates the feeling of individual guilt, gives us reassurance that we are not left alone and are not cast aside. The new need for response in love and in sex can be traced to the same source as the impulses which are at the roots of other achievements. They also spring from the same unconscious awareness of our inadequacy and the effort to overcome it. The conviction that one is undesirable prevents the development of one's own desire. The belief that they are not lovable can make men and women renounce all loving. "I am so afraid of being rejected that I am rejecting myself, to give no one else the chance," said a patient.

Insight into the increasing importance of response and into the dynamics of unconscious identification in sexual imagery and activity allows us to formulate a hidden law which seems to govern the processes of sex in our time. An inner demand impells us to do unto others what we wish others would do unto us. We must have the firm belief that in sex also we get only what we give. You hear and read much now about "glamourized sex," but what is meant is not the elementary, crude sex-drive any more. This can as little be glamourized or glorified as can the processes of elimination. Glamour can shed its aura only on the combination of



the sex-urge with tenderer impulses. The significance of the response and of the identification process in sex proves that they result from such mixtures.

This book is of a challenging nature and it remains true to character when I boldly assert that the reward in sex is not only physical satisfaction and that the power and glory of sex is not only sexual.

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## *Meeting and Melting*

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WE ARE interested at this point in the amalgamation of the sex-urge, of the need to conquer, and of affection. It was necessary to separate and differentiate these drives and urges which we seldom discriminate when we talk about the happiness of a young couple John and Jane. It is necessary now to understand that the blending of these different needs makes them happy. The attraction of the woman for the man and of the man for the woman is a combination of sex appeal and personality appeal. The opinion that man goes from sex to love while woman comes from love to sex, may be correct, but the principle is subject to numerous exceptions arising from individual differences. That women have a weaker sex-urge than men is very doubtful. This impression is given us by the behavior patterns, which are different for both sexes in our culture, but also, and more definitely, by the fact that aggressiveness and the drive toward conquest are more strongly developed in men. The mixture is different because there is a greater portion of the old conquering ego-drives in masculine than in feminine sexuality. It should also be considered that inhibiting and retarding factors operate within the woman, but that they do not hinder the full development of man's sexuality.

The process of the mixture of the three drives, those of sex, of power, and of tenderness, is comparable to a blend in which the ingredients cannot be separated and individually distinguished any more. There is no wall between these different impulses, only an impermeable membrane which makes an osmosis possible. The osmosis is so complete that the expression of one drive can appear as a manifestation of another. Sex, aggressiveness, and love



overlap, become inseparable. The soul is in the flesh, and the flesh is in the soul. The wedding of affection and sex is a high time in human life. The charm of the beloved's body and of her mind are so joined that the man cannot distinguish between them. Both trouble his senses, and both exalt his thoughts. The combination is as intricate as the design of an Oriental carpet, in which intertwining lines form a single picture, but the interlacings are difficult to trace.

Three rivers coming from different directions flow into each other, and their waters unite to form a powerful current which sweeps away every hindrance. The confluence of the rivers represents a summation greater in strength than the sum of the individual currents. In order to appreciate the resulting power, the force of each river should rather be multiplied than added. Each of them gains by the other's depth and volume. Looking at this picture you will appreciate that romantic love is not sluggish sex-urge, but a deep and rapid tributary of the older stream of the ego-drives. It was separated from them and followed its own course until it joined the currents of sex and domination. At such a point the poets conceived of celestial and earthly love uniting, at the point where the old abyss between physical and cultural needs is bridged, where the sex-urge and craving for affection are gratified. Sex brings satisfaction and love brings happiness as their respective contributions to the elation which John and Jane feel in their moments of ecstatic fulfillment. Sharp delight and serene satisfaction take turns; the answer of the flesh becomes at the same time the response of the mind. The satisfaction of sex is complete because it is at the same time the full expression of tenderness and the triumph of the ego. In this deeply satisfying experience the partners can no longer distinguish what is pleasure and what joy, what is given and what received. The mind and the flesh are so integrated that their claims to satisfactions attain simultaneous and mutual exaltation.

Such coincidence and synthesis of the three great drives is not, as may be supposed, general. It is the exception and signifies a peak of human happiness by no means reached in every individual life. Often enough, the gulf between sex and affection, between tenderness and possessiveness is never bridged. The sex-drive

calls to the mind different images from those called up by affection. The man who searches for complete fulfillment often finds only sexual satisfaction and feels his yearning for companionship unrealized; and the woman is often incapable of enjoying sexual pleasure if she is not certain of being loved.

As the claims of civilization increase, the reaction of the partner gains in significance, and the personal element in general and in physical satisfaction becomes a decisive factor. It becomes more difficult for the cultured man to enjoy sexual pleasure without giving in return, and he can do so only if sex desire and affection are co-existent in the woman. It is not by the sexual equivalent of bread alone that man must live. He desires more than satisfaction of the empty lust of a fleeting moment. He, and especially she, wishes that the sexual impulses and the need of companionship should not be separated any longer and that one person should be able to fulfill the demands of affection, of sex and of power.

There is no general solution to the problem. Every man and every woman has to find an individual way for himself and herself. No mass hiking tours can be made into the secret country of love. But when a couple like John and Jane find the way into its domain, they assure us that they feel as one person. The frontiers of individuality are no longer barriers, nor are the boundaries which separated sex, the lust of power, and love. We are all puzzled by such a spectacle, even the psychologist, who feels more and more curious as he observes that conflicting emotional forces suddenly co-operate. It will be a long time before his curiosity is altogether satisfied.



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## *Postlude*

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IN SAYING farewell to John and Jane and to many other young couples like them, we realize that their romance will not last very long. Grievings and sorrows, disappointments and conflicts of different kinds are waiting for them. Other joys, however, are prepared for them, and we hope that an afterglow of the happiness which is now theirs will accompany them on their common road.

We look back, and we wonder: is this the mixture which makes romance? Are there really so few components which create this glamour? Not more? No, not more, but remember that even the greatest works of music which we enjoy are made from eight notes only.

In the performance of this symphony we call life the sex-drive plays among the first violins, but the concert-master is the ego. The voice of his magnificent instrument may be drowned now and then, but it always remains audible until the very end. And sometimes all other instruments of the orchestra are silent. The concert-master now plays a solo, full of longing and tenderness—the interlude of love. When the other violins then join in the tune, they lead the orchestra in a powerful unison to a climax of beatitude.